

Mr. Pickwick slides

*Frontispiece*

THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF

THE PICKWICK CLUB

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

VOL. II.

*Illustrated*

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RICHARD CLAY & SONS,  
BREAD STREET HILL, LONDON,  
*Bungay, Suffolk*

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PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE STORY OF THE GOBLINS WHO STOLE A SEXTON

“IN an old abbey town, down in this part of the country, a long, long while ago—so long, that the story must be a true one, because our great grandfathers implicitly believed it—there officiated as sexton and grave-digger in the churchyard, one Gabriel Grub. It by no means follows that because a man is a sexton, and constantly surrounded by the emblems of mortality, therefore he should be a morose and melancholy man, your undertakers are the merriest fellows in the world; and I once had the honour of being on intimate terms with a mute, who in private life, and off duty, was as comical and jocose a little fellow as ever chirped out a devil-may-care song, without a hitch in his memory, or drained off the contents of a good stiff glass without stopping for breath. But, notwithstanding these precedents to the contrary, Gabriel Grub was an ill-conditioned, cross-grained, surly fellow—a morose and lonely man, who consorted with nobody but himself, and an old wicker bottle which fitted into his large deep waistcoat pocket—and who eyed each merry face, as it passed him by, with such a deep scowl of malice and ill-humour, as it was difficult to meet, without feeling something the worse for.

“A little before twilight, one Christmas Eve, Gabriel, shoul-  
dered his spade, lighted his lantern, and betook himself towards  
the old churchyard, for he had got a grave to finish by next  
morning, and, feeling very low, he thought it might raise his  
spirits, perhaps, if he went on with his work at once. As he  
went his way, up the ancient street, he saw the cheerful light  
of the blazing fires gleam through the old casements, and  
heard the loud laugh and the cheerful shouts of those who  
were assembled round them, he marked the bustling prepara-  
tions for next day’s cheer, and smelt the numerous savoury  
odours consequent thereupon, as they steamed up from  
the kitchen windows in clouds. All this was gall and worm-  
wood to the heart of Gabriel Grub, and when groups of  
children bounded out of the houses, tripped across the road,  
and were met, before they could knock at the opposite door, by  
half a dozen curly-headed little rascals who crowded round  
them as they flocked up-stairs to spend the evening in their  
Christmas games, Gabriel smiled grimly, and clutched the  
handle of his spade with a firmer grasp, as he thought of  
measles, scarlet-fever, thrush, hooping-cough, and a good many  
other sources of consolation besides.

“In this happy frame of mind, Gabriel strolled along, return-  
ing a short, sullen growl to the good-humoured greetings of  
such of his neighbours as now and then passed him until he  
turned into the dark lane which led to the churchyard. Now,  
Gabriel had been looking forward to reaching the dark lane,  
because it was, generally speaking, a nice, gloomy, mournful  
place, into which the towns-people did not much care to go,  
except in broad day-light, and when the sun was shining, con-  
sequently, he was not a little indignant to hear a young urchin  
roaring out some jolly song about a merry Christmas, in this  
very sanctuary, which had been called Coffin Lane ever since  
the days of the old abbey, and the time of the shaven-headed  
monks. As Gabriel walked on, and the voice drew nearer, he  
found it proceeded from a small boy, who was hurrying along,  
to join one of the little parties in the old street, and who, partly  
to keep himself company, and partly to prepare himself for the  
occasion, was shouting out the song at the highest pitch of his  
lungs. So Gabriel waited until the boy came up, and then  
dodged him into a corner, and rapped him over the head with  
his lantern five or six times, to teach him to modulate his voice.

And as the boy hurried away with his hand to his head, singing quite a different sort of tune, Gabriel Grub chuckled very heartily to himself, and entered the churchyard locking the gate behind him.

"He took off his coat, put down his lantern, and getting into the unfinished grave, worked at it for an hour or so, with right good will. But the earth was hardened with the frost, and it was no very easy matter to break it up, and shovel it out, and although there was a moon, it was a very young one, and shed little light upon the grave, which was in the shadow of the church. At any other time, these obstacles would have made Gabriel Grub very moody and miserable, but he was so well pleased with having stopped the small boy's singing, that he took little heed of the scanty progress he had made, and looked down into the grave, when he had finished work for the night, with grim satisfaction murmurings as he gathered up his things.

Brave lodgments for one, brave lodgments for one,  
A few feet of cold earth, when life is done,  
A stone at the head, a stone at the feet,  
A rich, juicy meal for the worms to eat,  
Rank grass over head, and damp clay around,  
Brave lodgments for one, these, in holy ground!

"'Ho! ho!' laughed Gabriel Grub, as he sat himself down on a flat tombstone which was a favourite resting-place of his, and drew forth his wicker bottle 'A coffin at Christmas! A Christmas Box Ho! ho! ho!'

"'Ho! ho! ho!' repeated a voice which sounded close behind him.

Gabriel paused, in some alarm, in the act of raising the wicker bottle to his lips and looked round. The bottom of the oldest grave about him was not more still and quiet than the churchyard in the pale moonlight. The cold hoar-frost glistened on the tombstones, and sparkled like rows of gems, among the stone carvings of the old church. The snow lay hard and crisp upon the ground, and spread over the thickly-strewed mounds of earth, so white and smooth a cover, that it seemed as if corpses lay there hidden only by their winding-sheets. Not the faintest rustle broke the profound tranquillity of the solemn scene. Sound itself appeared to be frozen up, all was so cold and still.

"'It was the echoes,' said Gabriel Grub, raising the bottle to his lips again.

“‘It was *not*,’ said a deep voice

“Gabriel started up, and stood rooted to the spot with astonishment and terror, for his eyes rested on a form that made his blood run cold

“Seated on an upright tombstone, close to him, was a strange unearthly figure, whom Gabriel felt at once, was no being of this world. His long fantastic legs which might have reached the ground, were cocked up, and crossed after a quaint, fantastic fashion, his sinewy arms were bare, and his hands rested on his knees. On his short round body, he wore a close covering, ornamented with small slashes, a short coat dangled at his back, the collar was cut into curious peaks, which served the goblin in lieu of ruff or neckerchief, and his shoes curled up at his toes into long points. On his head, he wore a broad-brimmed sugar-loaf hat, garnished with a single feather. The hat was covered with the white frost, and the goblin looked as if he had sat on the same tombstone, very comfortably, for two or three hundred years. He was sitting perfectly still, his tongue was put out, as if in derision, and he was grinning at Gabriel Grub with such a grin as only a goblin could call up

“‘It was *not* the echoes,’ said the goblin.

“Gabriel Grub was paralysed, and could make no reply

“‘What do you do here on Christmas Eve?’ said the goblin, sternly

“‘I came to dig a grave, sir,’ stammered Gabriel Grub

“‘What man wanders among graves and churchyards on such a night as this?’ cried the goblin

“‘Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!’ screamed a wild chorus of voices that seemed to fill the churchyard. Gabriel looked fearfully round—nothing was to be seen

“‘What have you got in that bottle?’ said the goblin

“‘Hollands, sir,’ replied the sexton, trembling more than ever, for he had bought it of the smugglers, and he thought that perhaps his questioner might be in the excise department of the goblins

“‘Who drinks Hollands alone, and in a churchyard, on such a night as this?’ said the goblin

“‘Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!’ exclaimed the wild voices again

“The goblin leered maliciously at the terrified sexton, and then raising his voice, exclaimed.

“‘And who, then, is our fair and lawful prize?’

“To this inquiry the invisible chorus replied, in a strain that sounded like the voices of many choristers singing to the mighty swell of the old church organ—a strain that seemed borne to the sexton’s ears upon a wild wind, and to die away as it passed onward, but the burden of the reply was still the same, ‘Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!’

“The goblin grinned a broader grin than before, as he said, ‘Well, Gabriel, what do you say to this?’

“The sexton gasped for breath

“‘What do you think of this, Gabriel?’ said the goblin, kicking up his feet in the air on either side of the tombstone, and looking at the turned-up points with as much complacency as if he had been contemplating the most fashionable pair of Wellingtons in all Bond Street

“‘It’s—it’s—very curious, sir,’ replied the sexton, half dead with fright, ‘very curious, and very pretty, but I think I’ll go back and finish my work, sir, if you please’

“‘Work!’ said the goblin, ‘what work?’

“‘The grave, sir, making the grave,’ stammered the sexton

“‘Oh, the grave, eh?’ said the goblin, ‘who makes graves at a time when all other men are merry, and takes a pleasure in it?’

“Again the mysterious voices replied, ‘Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!’

“‘I’m afraid my friends want you, Gabriel,’ said the goblin, thrusting his tongue further into his cheek than ever—and a most astonishing tongue it was—‘I’m afraid my friends want you, Gabriel,’ said the goblin.

“‘Under favour, sir,’ replied the horrid-stricken sexton, ‘I don’t think they can, sir, they don’t know me, sir, I don’t think the gentlemen have ever seen me, sir’

“‘Oh yes they have,’ replied the goblin, ‘we know the man with the sulky face and grim scowl, that came down the street to-night, throwing his evil looks at the children, and gasping his burying spade the tighter. We know the man who stuck the boy in the envious malice of his heart, because the boy could be merry, and he could not. We know him, we know him.’

“Here, the goblin gave a loud shrill laugh, which the echoes returned twenty-fold. and throwing his legs up in the air,

stood upon his head, or rather upon the very point of his sugar-loaf hat, on the narrow edge of the tombstone whence he threw a somerset with extraordinary agility, right to the sexton's feet, at which he planted himself in the attitude in which tailors generally sit upon the shop-board

"‘I—I—am afraid I must leave you, sir,’ said the sexton, making an effort to move

“‘Leave us!’ said the goblin, ‘Gabriel Grub going to leave us? Ho! ho! ho!’

“As the goblin laughed, the sexton observed, for one instant, a brilliant illumination within the windows of the church, as if the whole building were lighted up, it disappeared, the organ pealed forth a lively air, and whole troops of goblins, the very counterpart of the first one, poured into the churchyard, and began playing at leap-frog with the tombstones never stopping for an instant to take breath, but ‘overe’ the highest among them, one after the other, with the most marvellous dexterity. The first goblin was a most astonishing leaper, and none of the others could come near him, even in the extremity of his terror the sexton could not help observing, that while his friends were content to leap over the common-sized gravestones, the first one took the family vaults, iron railings and all, with as much ease as if they had been so many street posts

“At last the game reached to a most exciting pitch, the organ played quicker and quicker, and the goblins leaped faster and faster coiling themselves up, rolling head over heels upon the ground, and bounding over the tombstones like footballs. The sexton's brain whirled round with the rapidity of the motion he beheld, and his legs reeled beneath him, as the spirits flew before his eyes when the goblin king, suddenly darting towards him, laid his hand upon his collar, and sank with him through the earth

“When Gabriel Grub had had time to fetch his breath, which the rapidity of his descent had for the moment taken away, he found himself in what appeared to be a large cavern, surrounded on all sides by crowds of goblins, ugly and grim, in the centre of the room, on an elevated seat, was stationed his friend of the churchyard, and close beside him stood Gabriel Grub himself, without power of motion

“‘Cold to-night,’ said the king of the goblins, ‘very cold. A glass of something warm, here!’

“At this command, half a dozen officious goblins, with a perpetual smile upon their faces, whom Gabriel Grub imagined to be courtiers, on that account, hastily disappeared, and presently returned with a goblet of liquid fire, which they presented to the king.

“Ah!” cried the goblin, whose cheeks and throat were transparent, as he tossed down the flame, “This warms one, indeed! Bring a bumper of the same, for Mr Grub.”

“It was in vain for the unfortunate sexton to protest that he was not in the habit of taking anything warm at night, one of the goblins held him while another poued the blazing liquid down his throat, the whole assembly screeched with laughter as he coughed and choked, and wiped away the tears which gushed plentifully from his eyes, after swallowing the burning draught.

“And now,” said the king, fantastically poking the taper corner of his sugar-loaf hat into the sexton’s eye, and thereby occasioning him the most exquisite pain “And now, show the map of misery and gloom, a few of the pictures from our own great storehouse!”

“As the goblin said this, a thick cloud which obscured the remote end of the cavern, rolled gradually away, and disclosed, apparently at a great distance, a small and scantily furnished, but neat and clean apartment. A crowd of little children were gathered round a bright fire, clinging to their mother’s gown, and gambolling around her chair. The mother occasionally rose, and drew aside the window-curtain, as if to look for some expected object, a frugal meal was ready spread upon the table, and an elbow chair was placed near the fire. A knock was heard at the door, the mother opened it, and the children crowded round her, and clapped their hands for joy, as their father entered. He was wet and weary, and shook the snow from his garments, as the children crowded round him, and seizing his cloak, hat, stick, and gloves, with busy zeal, ran with them from the room. Then, as he sat down to his meal before the fire, the children climbed about his knee, and the mother sat by his side, and all seemed happiness and comfort.

“But a change came upon the view, almost imperceptibly. The scene was altered to a small bed-room, where the fairest and youngest child lay dying, the roses had fled from his cheek, and the light from his eye, and even as the sexton

looked upon him with an interest he had never felt or known before, he died. His young brothers and sisters crowded round his little bed, and seized his tiny hand, so cold and heavy, but they shrank back from its touch, and looked with awe on his infant face, for calm and tranquil as it was, and sleeping in rest and peace as the beautiful child seemed to be, they saw that he was dead, and they knew that he was an Angel looking down upon, and blessing them, from a bright and happy Heaven.

"Again the light cloud passed across the picture, and again the subject changed. The father and mother were old and helpless now, and the number of those about them was diminished more than half, but content and cheerfulness sat on every face, and beamed in every eye, as they crowded round the fireside, and told and listened to old stories of earlier and bygone days. Slowly and peacefully, the father sank into the grave, and, soon after, the sharer of all his cares and troubles followed him to a place of rest. The few, who yet survived them, knelt by their tomb, and watered the green turf which covered it, with their tears, then rose, and turned away sadly and mournfully, but not with bitter cries, or despairing lamentations, for they knew that they should one day meet again; and once more they mixed with the busy world, and their content and cheerfulness were restored. The cloud settled upon the picture, and concealed it from the sexton's view.

"What do you think of *that*?" said the goblin, turning his large face towards Gabriel Grub.

"Gabriel murmured out something about its being very pretty, and looked somewhat ashamed, as the goblin bent his fiery eyes upon him.

"*You a miserable man!*" said the goblin, in a tone of excessive contempt. "You!" He appeared disposed to add more, but indignation choked his utterance, so he lifted up one of his very pliable legs, and flourishing it above his head a little, to insure his aim, administered a good sound kick to Gabriel Grub, immediately after which, all the goblins in waiting, crowded round the wretched sexton, and kicked him without mercy according to the established and invariable custom of courtiers upon earth, who kick whom royalty kicks, and hug whom royalty hugs.

"Show him some more!" said the king of the goblins.

"At these words, the cloud was dispelled, and a rich and beautiful landscape was disclosed to view—there is just such another, to this day, within half a mile of the old abbey town. The sun shone from out the clear blue sky, the water sparkled beneath his rays, and the trees looked greener, and the flowers more gay, beneath his cheering influence. The water rippled on, with a pleasant sound, the trees rustled in the light wind that murmured among their leaves, the birds sang upon the boughs, and the lark carolled on high, her welcome to the morning. Yes, it was morning, the bright, balmy morning of summer, the minutest leaf, the smallest blade of grass, was instinct with life. The ant crept forth to her daily toil, the butterfly fluttered and basked in the warm rays of the sun; myriads of insects spread their transparent wings, and revelled in their brief but happy existence. Man walked forth, elated with the scene, and all was brightness and splendour.

"'You a miserable man!' said the king of the goblins, in a more contemptuous tone than before. And again the king of the goblins gave his leg a flourish; again it descended on the shoulders of the sexton, and again the attendant goblins imitated the example of their chief.

"Many a time the cloud went and came, and many a lesson it taught to Gabriel Grub, who, although his shoulders smarted with pain from the frequent applications of the goblin's feet, looked on with an interest that nothing could diminish. He saw that men who worked hard, and earned their scanty bread with lives of labour, were cheerful and happy, and that to the most ignorant, the sweet face of nature was a never-failing source of cheerfulness and joy. He saw those who had been delicately nurtured, and tenderly brought up, cheerful under privations, and superior to suffering, that would have crushed many of a rougher grain, because they bore within their own bosoms the materials of happiness, contentment and peace. He saw that women, the tenderest and most fragile of all God's creatures, were the oftenest superior to sorrow, adversity, and distress, and he saw that it was because they bore, in their own hearts, an inexhaustible well-spring of affection and devotion. Above all, he saw that men like himself, who snarled at the mirth and cheerfulness of others, were the foulest weeds on the fair surface of the earth; and setting all the good of the world against the evil, he came to the conclusion that it was a

very decent and respectable sort of world after all. No sooner had he formed it, than the cloud which closed over the last picture, seemed to settle on his sense<sup>s</sup>, and lull him to repose. One by one the goblins faded from his sight, and as the last one disappeared he sunk to sleep.

"The day had broken when Gabriel Grub awoke, and found himself lying, at full length, on the flat grave-stone in the churchyard, with the wicker bottle lying empty by his side, and his coat, spade, and lantern, all well whitened by the last night's frost, scattered on the ground. The stone on which he had first seen the goblin seated, stood bolt upright before him, and the grave at which he had worked, the night before, was not far off. At first, he began to doubt the reality of his adventures, but the acute pain in his shoulders when he attempted to rise, assured him that the kicking of the goblins was certainly not ideal. He was staggered again, by observing no traces of footsteps in the snow on which the goblins had played at leap-frog with the grave-stones, but he speedily accounted for this circumstance when he remembered that, being spirits, they would leave no visible impression behind them. So, Gabriel Grub got on his feet as well as he could, for the pain in his back, and brushing the frost off his coat, put it on, and turned his face towards the town.

"But he was an altered man, and he could not bear the thought of returning to a place where his repentance would be scoffed at, and his reformation disbelieved. He hesitated for a few moments, and then turned away to wander where he might, and seek his bread elsewhere.

"The lantern, the spade, and the wicker bottle, were found, that day, in the churchyard. There were a great many speculations about the sexton's fate, at first, but it was speedily determined that he had been carried away by the goblins, and there were not wanting some very credible witnesses who had distinctly seen him whisked through the air off the back of a chestnut horse blind of one eye, with the hind-quarters of a hen, and the tail of a bear. At length all this was devoutly believed, and the new sexton used to exhibit to the curious, for a trifling emolument, a good-sized piece of the church weathercock which had been accidentally kicked off by the aforesaid horse in his aerial flight, and picked up by himself in the churchyard, a year or two afterwards.

“ Unfortunately, these stories were somewhat disturbed by the unlooked-for reappearance of Gabriel Grub himself, some ten years afterwards, a ragged, contented, rheumatic old man. He told his story to the clergyman, and also to the mayor, and in course of time it began to be received, as a matter of history, in which form it has continued down to this very day. The believers in the weathercock tale, having misplaced their confidence once, were not easily prevailed upon to part with it again, so they looked as wise as they could, shrugged their shoulders, touched their foreheads, and mumbled something about Gabriel Grub having drunk all the Hollands, and then fallen asleep on the flat tombstone, and they affected to explain what he supposed he had witnessed in the goblin’s cavern, by saying that he had seen the world, and grown wiser. But this opinion, which was by no means a popular one at any time, gradually died off, and be the matter how it may, as Gabriel Grub was afflicted with rheumatism to the end of his days, this story has at least one moral, if it teach no better one—and that is, that if a man turn sulky and drink by himself at Christmas time, he may make up his mind to be not a bit the better for it let the spirits be never so good, or let them be even as many degrees beyond proof, as those which Gabriel Grub saw in the goblin’s cavern.”

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## CHAPTER II

HOW THE PICKWICKIANS MADE AND CULTIVATED THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A COUPLE OF NICE YOUNG MEN BELONGING TO ONE OF THE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS, HOW THEY DISPORTED THEMSELVES ON THE ICE, AND HOW THEIR FIRST VISIT CAME TO A CONCLUSION

“ WELL, Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick as that favoured servitor entered his bed-chamber with his warm water, on the morning of Christmas Day, “ Still frosty?”

“ Water in the wash-hand basin’s a mask o’ ice, sir,” responded Sam.

“ Severe weather, Sam,” observed Mr. Pickwick

"Fine time for them as is well wopped up, as the Polar Bear said to himself, ven he was practising his skating," replied Mr Weller

"I shall be down in a quarter of an hour, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, untying his nightcap.

"Wery good, sir," replied Sam "There's a couple o' Sawbones down stairs"

"A couple of what!" exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, sitting up in bed.

"A couple o' Sawbones," said Sam.

"What's a Sawbones?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, not quite certain whether it was a live animal, or something to eat

"What! Don't you know what a Sawbones is, sir?" inquired Mr. Weller "I thought everybody know'd as a Sawbones was a Surgeon"

"Oh, a Surgeon, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile

"Just that, su," replied Sam "These here ones as is below, though, ain't reg'lai thorough-bred Sawbones, they're only in trainin'"

"In other words they're Medical Students, I suppose?" said Mr. Pickwick

Sam Weller nodded assent

"I am glad of it," said Mr. Pickwick, casting his nightcap energetically on the counterpane "They are fine fellows, very fine fellows, with judgments matured by observation and reflection, tastes refined by reading and study I am very glad of it"

"They're a smokin' cigars by the kitchen fire," said Sam

"Ah!" observed Mr. Pickwick, rubbing his hands, "overflowing with kindly feelings and animal spirits Just what I like to see"

"And one on 'em," said Sam, not noticing his master's interruption, "one on 'em's got his legs on the table, and is a drinkin' brandy neat, vle the t'other one—him in the bainacles —has got a barrel o' oysters between his knees, whic he's a openin' like steam, and as fast as he eats 'em, he takes a aim vith the shells at young diopsy, who's a cittin' down fast asleep, in the chimbley corner"

"Eccentricities of genius, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick "You may retire"

Sam did retire accordingly; Mr. Pickwick, at the expiration of the quarter of an hour, went down to breakfast.

"Here he is at last!" said old Mr Wardle. "Pickwick, this is Miss Allen's brother, Mr Benjamin Allen Ben we call him, and so may you if you like. This gentleman is his very particular friend, Mr —."

"Mr Bob Sawyer," interposed Mr Benjamin Allen, whereupon Mr Bob Sawyer and Mr Benjamin Allen laughed in concert.

Mr Pickwick bowed to Bob Sawyer, and Bob Sawyer bowed to Mr Pickwick. Bob and his very particular friend then applied themselves most assiduously to the eatables before them, and Mr Pickwick had an opportunity of glancing at them both.

Mr Benjamin Allen was a coarse, stout, thick-set young man, with black hair cut rather short, and a white face cut rather long. He was embellished with spectacles, and wore a white neckerchief. Below his single-breasted black surtout, which was buttoned up to his chin, appeared the usual number of pepper-and-salt coloured legs, terminating in a pair of imperfectly polished boots. Although his coat was short in the sleeves, it disclosed no vestige of a linen wristband, and although there was quite enough of his face to admit of the encroachment of a shirt collar, it was not graced by the small-t approach to that appendage. He presented, altogether, rather a mildewy appearance, and emitted a fragrant odour of full-flavoured Cubas.

Mr Bob Sawyer, who was habited in a coarse blue coat, which, without being either a great-coat or a surtout, partook of the nature and qualities of both, had about him that sort of slovenly smartness, and swaggering gait, which is peculiar to young gentlemen who smoke in the streets by day, shout and scream in the same by night, call waiters by their Christian names, and do various other acts and deeds of an equally facetious description. He wore a pair of plaid trousers, and a large rough double-breasted waistcoat, out of doors, he carried a thick stick with a big top. He eschewed gloves, and looked, upon the whole, something like a dissipated Robinson Crusoe.

Such were the two worthies to whom Mr Pickwick was introduced, as he took his seat at the breakfast table on Christmas morning.

"Splendid morning, gentlemen," said Mr Pickwick.

Mr Bob Sawyer slightly nodded his assent to the proposition, and asked Mr. Benjamin Allen for the mustard.

"Have you come far this morning, gentlemen?" inquired Mr. Pickwick

"Blue Lion at Muggleton," briefly responded Mr. Allen

"You should have joined us last night," said Mr. Pickwick.

"So we should," replied Bob Sawyer, "but the brandy was too good to leave in a hurry wasn't it, Ben?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Benjamin Allen, "and the cigars were not bad, or the pork chops either were they, Bob?"

"Decidedly not," said Bob. The particular friends resumed their attack upon the breakfast, more freely than before, as if the recollection of last night's supper had imparted a new relish to the meal.

"Peg away, Bob," said Mr. Allen to his companion, encouragingly.

"So I do," replied Bob Sawyer. And so, to do him justice, he did.

"Nothing like dissecting, to give one an appetite," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, looking round the table.

Mr. Pickwick slightly shuddered.

"By the bye, Bob," said Mr. Allen, "have you finished that leg yet?"

"Nearly," replied Sawyer, helping himself to half a fowl as he spoke. "It's a very muscular one for a child's."

"Is it?" inquired Mr. Allen, carelessly.

"Very," said Bob Sawyer, with his mouth full.

"I've put my name down for an aim, at our place," said Mr. Allen. "We're clubbing for a subject, and the list is nearly full, only we can't get hold of any fellow that wants a head. I wish you'd take it."

"No," replied Bob Sawyer, "can't afford expensive luxuries."

"Nonsense!" said Allen.

"Can't indeed," rejoined Bob Sawyer. "I wouldn't mind a brain, but I couldn't stand a whole head."

"Hush, hush, gentlemen, pray," said Mr. Pickwick, "I hear the ladies."

As Mr. Pickwick spoke, the ladies, gallantly escorted by Messrs. Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman, returned from an early walk.

"Why, Ben!" said Arabella, in a tone which expressed more surprise than pleasure at the sight of her brother.

"Come to take you home to-morrow," replied Benjamin Mr Winkle turned pale

"Don't you see Bob Sawyer, Arabella?" inquired Mr Benjamin Allen, somewhat reproachfully. Arabella gracefully held out her hand, in acknowledgment of Bob Sawyer's presence. A thrill of hatred struck to Mr Winkle's heart, as Bob Sawyer inflicted on the proffered hand a perceptible squeeze.

"Ben, dear!" said Arabella, blushing, "have—have—you been introduced to Mr Winkle?"

"I have not been, but I shall be very happy to be, Arabella," replied her brother gravely. Here Mr Allen bowed gaily to Mr Winkle, while Mr Winkle and Mr Bob Sawyer glanced mutual distrust out of the corners of their eyes.

The arrival of the two new visitors, and the consequent check upon Mr Winkle and the young lady with the fur round her boots, would in all probability have proved a very unpleasant interruption to the hilarity of the party, had not the cheerfulness of Mr Pickwick, and the good humour of the host, been exerted to the very utmost for the common weal. Mr Winkle gradually insinuated himself into the good graces of Mr Benjamin Allen, and even joined in a friendly conversation with Mr Bob Sawyer; who, enlivened with the brandy, and the breakfast, and the talking, gradually ripened into a state of extreme facetiousness, and related with much glee an agreeable anecdote, about the removal of a tumour on some gentleman's head which he illustrated by means of an oyster-knife and a half-quatern loaf, to the great edification of the assembled company. Then, the whole train went to church, where Mr Benjamin Allen fell fast asleep, while Mr Bob Sawyer abstained his thoughts from worldly matters, by the ingenious process of carving his name on the seat of the pew, in corpulent letters of four inches long.

"Now," said Wardle, after a substantial lunch, with the agreeable items of strong-beer and cherry-brandy, had been done ample justice to, "what say you to an hour on the ice? we shall have plenty of time."

"Capital!" said Mr Benjamin Allen.

"Prime!" ejaculated Mr Bob Sawyer.

"You skate, of course, Winkle?" said Wardle.

"Ye—yes, oh, yes," replied Mr. Winkle. "I—I—am rather out of practice."

"Oh, *do* skate, Mr Winkle," said Arabella, "I like to see it so much."

"Oh, it is *so* graceful," said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swan-like."

"I should be very happy, I'm sure," said Mr Winkle, reddening, "but I have no skates."

This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had a couple of pair, and the fat boy announced that there were half-a-dozen more down stairs whereat Mr Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice, and the fat boy and Mr Weller having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr Bob Sawyer adjusted his skates with a dexterity which to Mr Winkle was perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight, and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, to the excessive satisfaction of Mr Pickwick, Mr Tupman, and the ladies which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm, when old Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions, which they called a reel.

All this time, Mr Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skates on with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skates than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr Winkle was raised to his feet.

"Now, then, sir," said Sam, in an encouraging tone, "off with you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop!" said Mr Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arms with the grasp of a drowning man. "How slippery it is, Sam!"

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir," replied Mr Weller. "Hold up, sir!"

This last observation of Mr. Weller's bore reference to a demonstration Mr. Winkle made at the instant, of a frantic

desire to throw his feet in the air, and dash the back of his head on the ice

"These—these—are very awkward skates; ain't they, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering

"I'm afeard there's a oakard gen'l'm'n in 'em, sir," replied Sam

"Now, Winkle," cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was anything the matter. "Come, the ladies are all anxiety"

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile. "I'm coming"

"Just a goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavouring to disengage himself "Now, sir, start off!"

"Stop an instant, Sam," gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. "I find I've got a couple of coats at home that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam."

"Thank'ee, sir," replied Mr. Weller

"Never mind touching your hat, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, hastily. "You needn't take your hand away to do that I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas-box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam."

"You're very good, sir," replied Mr. Weller

"Just hold me at first, Sam, will you?" said Mr. Winkle "There—that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam, not too fast."

Mr. Winkle stooping forward, with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and un-swan-like manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the opposite bank.

"Sam!"

"Sir?"

"Here I want you"

"Let go, sir," said Sam "Don't you hear the governor a callin'? Let go, sir!"

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonised Pickwickian, and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have insured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into

the centre of the reel, at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud clash they both fell heavily down Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the kind, in skates He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic efforts to smile, but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety

"Not much," said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard

"I wish you'd let me bleed you," said Mr. Benjamin with great eagerness.

"No, thank you," replied Mr. Winkle, hurriedly

"I really think you had better," said Allen

"Thank you," replied Mr. Winkle, "I'd rather not."

"What do you think, Mr. Pickwick?" inquired Bob Sawyer

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant He beckoned to Mr. Weller, and said in a stern voice, "Take his skates off"

"No, but really I had scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr. Winkle

"Take his skates off," repeated Mr. Pickwick, firmly

The command was not to be resisted Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it in silence

"Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the by-standers; and, beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low, but distinct and emphatic tone, the remarkable words.

"You're a humbug, sir!"

"A what?" said Mr. Winkle, starting

"A humbug, sir I will speak plainer, if you wish it An impostor, sir!"

With those words, Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel, and rejoined his friends

While Mr. Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr. Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavours cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon, in a very masterly and brilliant manner Sam Weller, in particular, was displaying that beautiful feat of fancy-sliding

which is currently denominated "knocking at the cobbler's door," and which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot, and occasionally giving a postman's knock upon it with the other. It was a good long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

"It looks a nice warm exercise that, doesn't it?" he inquired of Wardle, when that gentleman was thoroughly out of breath, by reason of the indefatigable manner in which he had converted his legs into a pair of compasses, and drawn complicated problems on the ice.

"Ah, it does indeed," replied Wardle. "Do you slide?"

"I used to do so, on the gutters, when I was a boy," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Try it now," said Wardle.

"Oh do please, Mr. Pickwick!" cried all the ladies.

"I should be very happy to afford you any amusement," replied Mr. Pickwick, "but I haven't done such a thing these thirty years."

"Pooh! pooh! Nonsense!" said Wardle, dragging off his skates with the impetuosity which characterised all his proceeding's. "Here, I'll keep you company, come along!" And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr. Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves and put them in his hat, took two or three short runs, baulked himself as often, and at last took another run, and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

"Keep the pot a boilin', su!" said Sam, and down went Wardle again, and then Mr. Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle, and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr. Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their future prospects in life depended on their expedition.

It was the most intensely interesting thing, to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share in the ceremony, to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind, gazing upon him at the imminent

hazard of tripping him up, to see him gradually expend the painful force he had put on at first, and turn slowly round on the slide, with his face towards the point from which he had started, to contemplate the playful smile which mantled on his face when he had accomplished the distance, and the eagerness with which he turned round when he had done so, and ran after his predecessor his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow, and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles. And when he was knocked down (which happened upon the average every third round), it was the most invigorating sight that can possibly be imagined, to behold him gather up his hat, gloves, and handkerchief, with a glowing countenance, and resume his station in the rank, with an ardour and enthusiasm that nothing could abate.

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared, the water bubbled up over it, Mr Pickwick's hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface, and this was all of Mr Pickwick that anybody could see.

Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance, the males turned pale, and the females fainted, Mr Snodgrass and Mr Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down, with frenzied eagerness while Mr Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any persons who might be within hearing, the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming "Fire!" with all his might.

It was at this moment, when old Wadle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, and Mr Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr Bob Sawyer, on the advisability of bleeding the company generally, as an improving little bit of professional practice—it was at this very moment, that a face, head, and shoulders, emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr Pickwick.

"Keep yourself up for an instant—for only one instant," bawled Mr Snodgrass.

"Yes, do, let me implore you—for my sake!" roared Mr Winkle, deeply affected. The adjuration was rather unnecessary, the probability being, that if Mr Pickwick had declined to keep himself up for anybody else's sake, it would have occurred to him that he might as well do so, for his own

"Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?" said Wardle

"Yes, certainly," replied Mr Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath "I fell upon my back—I couldn't get on my feet at first"

The clay upon<sup>so</sup> much of Mr Pickwick's coat as was yet visible, bore testimony to the accuracy of this statement; and as the fears of the spectators were still further relieved by the fat boy's suddenly recollecting that the water was nowhere more than five feet deep, prodigies of valour were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggling, Mr Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position, and once more stood on dry land.

"Oh, he'll catch his death of cold," said Emily

"Dear old thing!" said Arabella "Let me wrap this shawl round you, Mr Pickwick"

"Ah, that's the best thing you can do," said Wardle, "and when you've got it on run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly"

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant. Three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr Weller presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman, dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground, without any clearly defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.

But Mr Pickwick cared not for appearances in such an extreme case, and urged on by Sam Weller, he kept at the very top of his speed until he reached the door of Manor Farm, where Mr Tupman had arrived some five minutes before, and had frightened the old lady into palpitations of the heart by impressing her with the unalterable conviction that the kitchen chimney was on fire—a calamity which always presented itself in glowing colours to the old lady's mind, when anybody about her evinced the smallest agitation.

Mr Pickwick paused not an instant until he was snug in bed.

Sam Weller lighted a blazing fire in the room, and took up his dinner, a bowl of punch was carried up afterwards, and a grand carouse held in honour of his safety. Old Wardle would not hear of his rising, so they made the bed the chair, and Mr. Pickwick presided. A second and a third bowl were ordered in, and when Mr. Pickwick awoke next morning, there was not a symptom of rheumatism about him which proves, as Mr. Bob Sawyer very justly observed, that there is nothing like hot punch in such cases and that if even hot punch did fail to act as a preventive, it was merely because the patient fell into the vulgar error of not taking enough of it.

The jovial party broke up next morning. Breakings up are capital things in our school days, but in after life they are painful enough. Death, self-interest, and fortune's changes, are every day breaking up many a happy group, and scattering them far and wide, and the boys and girls never come back again. We do not mean to say that it was exactly the case in this particular instance, all we wish to inform the reader is, that the different members of the party dispersed to their several homes, that Mr. Pickwick and his friends once more took their seats on the top of the Muggleton coach, and that Arabella Allen repaired to her place of destination, wherever it might have been—we dare say Mr. Winkle knew, but we confess we don't—under the care and guardianship of her brother Benjamin, and his most intimate and particular friend, Mr. Bob Sawyer.

Before they separated, however, that gentleman and Mr. Benjamin Allen drew Mr. Pickwick aside with an air of some mystery and Mr. Bob Sawyer thrusting his forefinger between two of Mr. Pickwick's ribs, and thereby displaying his native drollery, and his knowledge of the anatomy of the human frame, at one and the same time, inquired

“I say, old boy, where do you hang out?”

Mr. Pickwick replied that he was at present suspended at the George and Vulture

“I wish you'd come and see me,” said Bob Sawyer

“Nothing would give me greater pleasure,” replied Mr. Pickwick

“There's my lodgings,” said Mr. Bob Sawyer, producing a card “Lant Street, Borough, it's near Guy's, and handly for me, you know. Little distance after you've passed St. George's,

Church—turns out of the High Street on the right hand side the way ”

“ I shall find it,” said Mr Pickwick

“ Come on Thursday fortnight, and bring the other chaps with you,” said Mr Bob Sawyer, “ I’m going to have a few medical fellows that night ”

Mr Pickwick expressed the pleasure it would afford him to meet the medical fellows, and after Mr Bob Sawyer had informed him that he meant to be very cosey, and that his friend Ben was to be one of the party, they shook hands and separated.

We feel that in this place we lay ourself open to the inquiry whether Mr Winkle was whispering, during this brief conversation, to Arabella Allen, and if so, what he said, and furthermore, whether Mr Snodgrass was conversing apart with Emily Wardle, and if so, what he said. To this, we reply, that whatever they might have said to the ladies, they said nothing at all to Mr Pickwick or Mr Tupman for eight-and-twenty miles, and that they sighed very often, refused ale and brandy, and looked gloomy. If our observant lady readers can deduce any satisfactory inferences from these facts, we beg them by all means to do so.

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### CHAPTER III.

WHICH IS ALL ABOUT THE LAW, AND SUNDRY GREAT AUTHORITIES LEARNED THEREIN

SCATTERED about, in various holes and corners of the Temple, are certain dark and dirty chambers, in and out of which, all the morning in Vacation, and half the evening too in Term time, there may be seen constantly hurrying with bundles of papers under their arms, and protruding from their pockets, an almost uninterrupted succession of Lawyers’ Clerks. There are several grades of Lawyers’ Clerks. There is the Articled Clerk, who has paid a premium, and is an attorney in perspective, who runs a tailor’s bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family

n Gower Street, and another in Tavistock Square, who goes out of town every Long Vacation to see his father, who keeps live horses innumerable, and who is, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks. There is the salaried clerk—out of door, or in door, as the case may be—who devotes the major part of his thirty shillings a week to his personal pleasure and adornment, repays half-price to the Adelphi Theatre at least thrice times a week, dissipates majestically at the cider cellars afterwards, and is a dirty caricature of the fashion which expiated six months ago. There is the middle-aged copying clerk, with a large family, who is always shabby, and often drunk. And there are the office lads in their first surtouts, who feel a befitting contempt for boys at day-schools club as they go home at night, for savileys and porters and think there's nothing like "life." There are varieties of the genus, too numerous to recapitulate, but however numerous they may be, they are all to be seen, at certain regulated business hours, hurrying to and from the places we have just mentioned.

These sequestered nooks are the public offices of the legal profession, where writs are issued, judgment signed, declarations filed, and numerous other ingenious machines put in motion for the torture and torment of His Majesty's liege subjects, and the comfort and emolument of the practitioners of the law. They are, for the most part, low-roofed, mouldy rooms, where innumerable rolls of parchment, which have been perspiring in secret for the last century, send forth an agreeable odour, which is mingled by day with the scent of the dry rot, and by night with the various exhalations which arise from damp cloaks, festering umbrellas, and the coarsest tallow candles.

About half-past seven o'clock in the evening, some ten days or a fortnight after Mr. Pickwick and his friends returned to London, there hurried into one of these offices, an individual in a brown coat and brass buttons, whose long hair was scrupulously twisted round the rim of his napless hat, and whose soiled drab trousers were so tightly strapped over his Blucher boots, that his knees threatened every moment to start from their concealment. He produced from his coat pockets a long and narrow strip of parchment, on which the presiding functionary impressed an illegible black stamp. He then drew forth four scraps of paper, of similar dimensions, each containing a printed copy of the strip of parchment with blanks for a name; and

having filled up the blanks, put all the five documents in his pocket, and hurried away.

The man in the brown coat, with the cabalistic documents in his pocket, was no other than our old acquaintance Mr Jackson, of the house of Dodson and Fogg, Freemason's Court, Cornhill. Instead of returning to the office from whence he came, however, he bent his steps direct to Sun Court, and walking straight into the George and Vulture, demanded to know whether one Mr Pickwick was within.

"Call Mr Pickwick's servant, Tom," said the bairnail of the George and Vulture.

"Don't trouble yourself," said Mr Jackson, "I've come on business. If you'll show me Mr. Pickwick's room I'll step up myself."

"What name, sir?" said the waiter.

"Jackson," replied the clerk.

The waiter stepped up stairs to announce Mr Jackson, but Mr Jackson saved him the trouble by following close at his heels, and walking into the apartment before he could articulate a syllable.

Mr Pickwick had, that day, invited his three friends to dinner; they were all seated round the fire, drinking their wine, when Mr Jackson presented himself, as above described.

"How do do, sir?" said Mr Jackson, nodding to Mr Pickwick.

That gentleman bowed, and looked somewhat surprised, for the physiognomy of Mr Jackson dwelt not on his recollection.

"I have called from Dodson and Fogg's," said Mr Jackson in an explanatory tone.

Mr Pickwick roused at the name. "I refer you to my attorney, sir, Mr Perker, of Gray's Inn," said he. "Waiter, show this gentleman out."

"Beg your pardon, Mr Pickwick," said Jackson, deliberately depositing his hat on the floor, and drawing from his pocket the strip of parchment. "But personal service, by clerk or agent, in these cases, you know, Mr Pickwick—nothing like caution, sir, in all legal forms?"

Here Mr Jackson cast his eye on the parchment, and resting his hands on the table, and looking round with a winning and persuasive smile, said "Now, come, don't let's have no words

about such a little matter as this Which of you gentlemen's name's Snodglass?"

At this inquiry Mr Snodgrass gave such a very undisguised and palpable start, that no further reply was needed

"Ah! I thought so," said Mr Jackson, more affably than before "I've got a little something to trouble you with, sir"

"Me!" exclaimed Mr Snodgrass

"It's only a *subpoena* in Beldell and Pickwick on behalf of the plaintiff," replied Jackson, singling out one of the slips of paper, and producing a shilling from his waistcoat pocket "It'll come on, in the settens after Ten, fourteenth of Febooray, we expect, we've marked it a special jury cause, and it's only ten down the paper That's yours, Mr Snodgrass" As Jackson said this he presented the parchment before the eyes of Mr Snodgrass, and slipped the paper and the shilling into his hand

Mr Tupman had witnessed this process in silent astonishment, when Jackson, turning sharply upon him, said

"I think I ain't mistaken when I say your name's Tupman, am I?"

Mr Tupman looked at Mr Pickwick, but, perceiving no engagement in that gentleman's widely-opened eyes to deny his name, said.

"Yes, my name is Tupman, sir"

"And that other gentleman's Mr Winkle, I think?" said Jackson

Mr Winkle faltered out a reply in the affirmative, and both gentlemen were forthwith invested with a slip of paper, and a shilling each, by the dexterous Mr Jackson

"Now," said Jackson, "I'm afraid you'll think me rather troublesome, but I want somebody else, if it ain't inconvenient I have Samuel Weller's name here, Mr Pickwick"

"Send my servant here, waiter," said Mr Pickwick The waiter retired, considerably astonished, and Mr Pickwick motioned Jackson to a seat

There was a painful pause, which was at length broken by the innocent defendant

"I suppose, sir," said Mr Pickwick, his indignation rising while he spoke, "I suppose, sir, that it is the intention of your employers to seek to criminate me upon the testimony of my own friends?"

Mr. Jackson struck his forefinger several times against the

left side of his nose, to intimate that he was not there to disclose the secrets of the prison-house, and playfully rejoined

"Not knowin', can't say"

"For what other reason, sir," pursued Mr. Pickwick, "are these subpennas served upon them, if not fo. this?"

"Very good plant, Mr. Pickwick," replied Jackson, slowly shaking his head. "But it won't do. No harm in trying, but there's little to be got out of me."

Here Mr. Jackson smiled once more upon the company, and applying his left thumb to the tip of his nose, worked a visionary coffee-mill with his right hand, thereby performing a very graceful piece of pantomime (then much in vogue, but now, unhappily, almost obsolete) which was familiarly denominated "taking a grinder."

"No, no, Mr. Pickwick," said Jackson, in conclusion, "Perker's people must guess what we've served these subpennas for. If they can't, they must wait till the action comes on, and then they'll find out."

Mr. Pickwick bestowed a look of excessive disgust on his unwelcome visitor, and would probably have hurled some tremendous anathema at the heads of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, had not Sam's entrance at the instant interrupted him.

"Samuel Weller?" said Mr. Jackson, inquiringly

"Vun o' the truest things as you've said for many a long year," replied Sam, in a most composed manner.

"Here's a subpenna for you, Mr. Weller," said Jackson.

"What's that in English?" inquired Sam.

"Here's the original," said Jackson, declining the required explanation.

"Which?" said Sam.

"This," replied Jackson, shaking the parchment.

"Oh, that's the 'rig'nal, is it?" said Sam. "Well, I'm very glad I've seen the 'rig'nal, 'cos it's a gratifyin' sort o' thng, and eases vun's mind so much."

"And here's the shilling," said Jackson. "It's from Dodson and Fogg's."

"And it's uncommon handsome o' Dodson and Fogg, as knows so little of me, to come down with a present," said Sam. "I feel it as a very high compliment, sir, it's a very hon'able thing to them, as they knows how to reward merit wherever they meets it. Besides wch, it's affectin' to one's feelin's."

As Mr Weller said this, he inflicted a little friction on his right eye-lid, with the sleeve of his coat, after the most approved manner of actors when they are in domestic pathos.

Mr Jackson seemed rather puzzled by Sam's proceedings, but, as he had served the subpoenas, and had nothing more to say, he made a feint of putting on the one glove which he usually carried in his hand for the sake of appearances, and returned to the office to report progress.

Mr Pickwick slept little that night, his memory had received a very disagreeable refresher on the subject of Mrs Bardell's action. He breakfasted betimes next morning, and, desiring Sam to accompany him, set forth towards Gray's Inn Square.

"Sam!" said Mr Pickwick looking round, when they got to the end of Cheapside.

"Sir?" said Sam, stepping up to his master.

"Which way?"

"Up Newgate Street."

Mr Pickwick did not turn round immediately, but looked vacantly in Sam's face for a few seconds, and heaved a deep sigh.

"What's the matter, sir?" inquired Sam.

"This action, Sam," said Mr Pickwick, "is expected to come on, on the fourteenth of next month."

"Remarkable coincidence that 'ere, sir," replied Sam.

"Why remarkable, Sam?" inquired Mr Pickwick.

"Valentine's day, sir," responded Sam, "reg'lar good day for a breach o' promise trial."

Mr Weller's smile awakened no gleam of mirth in his master's countenance. Mr Pickwick turned abruptly round, and led the way in silence.

They had walked some distance. Mr Pickwick trotting on before, plunged in profound meditation, and Sam following behind, with a countenance expressive of the most enviable and easy defiance of everything and everybody. When the latter, who was always especially anxious to impart to his master any exclusive information he possessed, quickened his pace until he was close at Mr Pickwick's heels, and, pointing up at a house they were passing, said

"Wery nice pork-shop that 'ere, sir."

"Yes, it seems so," said Mr Pickwick.

"Celebrated Sassage factory," said Sam.

"Is it?" said Mr Pickwick

"Is it!" reiterated Sam, with some indignation "I should say then it was. Why, sir, bless you innocent eyebrows, that's where the mysterious disappearance of a spectable tradesman took place four years ago."

"You don't mean to say he was burked, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick, looking hastily round

"No, I don't indeed, sir," replied Mr Weller, "I wish I did far worse than that. He was the master o' that 'ere shop, sir, and the inventer o' the patent never-leavin'-off sausage steam engine, as ud swaller up a pavin' stone if you put it too near, and grind it into sausages as easy as if it was a tender young babby. Wey proud o' that machine he was, as it was nat'ral he should be, and he'd stand down in the cellar a lookin', at it wen it was in full play, till he got quite melancholy with joy. A wey happy man he'd ha' been, sir, in the procession o' that 'ere engine and two more lovely humfants besides, if it hadn't been for his wife, who was a most ow-dacious wimmin. She was always a follemin' him about, and dinnin' in his ears, 'till at last he couldn't stand it no longer. 'I'll tell you what it is, my dear,' he says one day, 'if you persevere in this here sort of amusement,' he says, 'I'm blessed if I don't go away to 'Merikin', and that's all about it.' 'You're a idle wilna,' says she, 'and I wish the 'Merikins joy of their bargam.' Arter which she keeps on abusin' him for half an hour, and then runs into the little parlour behind the shop, sets to a screamin', says he'll be the death on her, and falls in a fit, which lasts for threee good hours—one o' them fits which is all screamin' and kickin'. Well, next mornin', the husband was missin'. He hadn't taken nothin' from the till,—hadn't even put on his great coat—so it was quite cleau he wain't gone to 'Merikin'. Didn't come back next 'day, didn't come back next week. Missis had bills printed sayin' that, if he'd come back, he should be forgiven everythim' (which was very liberal seem' that he hadn't done nothin' at all), the canals was dragged, and for two months arterwards, wenever a body turned up, it was carried, as a reg'lar thing, straight off to the sausage shop. Hows'ever, ~~now~~ on 'em answered, so they gave out that he'd run away, and she kep on the bis'ness. One Saturday mght, a little thin old gen'l'm'n comes into the shop in a great passion and says, 'Are you the missis o' this here shop?' 'Yes, I am,' says she,

'Well, ma'am,' says he, 'then I've just looked in to say that me and my family ain't a goin' to be chok'd for 'nothin', and more than that, ma'am,' he says, 'you'll allow me to observe, that as you don't use the plimest parts of the meat in the manafacter o' sassages, I think you'd find beef come nealy as cheap as buttons' 'As buttons, sir!' says she 'Buttons, ma'am,' says the little old gentleman, unfolding a bit of paper, and showin' twenty or thirty halves o' buttons 'Nice seasonin' for sassages, is trouser's buttons, ma'am' 'They're my husband's buttons!' says the widder, beginnin' to faint 'What!' screams the little old gen'l'm'n, turnin' very pale 'I see it all,' says the widder, 'in a fit of temporary insanity he rashly converted his-self into sassages!' And so he had, sir," said Mr Weller, looking steadily into Mr Pickwick's horror-stricken countenance, "or else he'd been draw'd into the engine, but however that might ha' been the little old gen'l'm'n, who had been remarkably partial to sassages all his life, rush'd out o' the shop in a wild state, and was never heerd on afterwards!"

The relation of this affecting incident of private life brought master and man to Mr Perker's chambers Lowten, holding the door half open, was in conversation with a rustily-clad, miserable-looking man, in boots without toes and gloves without fingers. There were traces of privation and suffering—almost of despair—in his lank and care-worn countenance, he felt his poverty, for he shunk to the dark side of the staircase as Mr Pickwick approached

"It's very unfortunate," said the stranger, with a sigh.

"Very," said Lowten, scribbling his name on the door-post with his pen, and rubbing it out again with the feather "Will you leave a message for him?"

"When do you think he'll be back?" inquired the stranger.

"Quite uncertain," replied Lowten, winking at Mr Pickwick, as the stranger cast his eyes towards the ground

"You don't think it would be of any use my waiting for him?" said the stranger, looking wistfully into the office

"Oh no, I'm sure it wouldn't," replied the clerk, moving a little more into the centre of the door-way "He's certain to be back this week, and it's a chance whether he will be next, for when Perker once gets out of town, he's never in a hurry to come back again"

"Out of town!" said Mr. Pickwick, "dear me, how unfortunate!"

"Don't go away, Mr. Pickwick," said Lowten, "I've got a letter for you." The stranger seeming to hesitate, once more looked towards the ground, and the clerk winked slyly at Mr. Pickwick, as if to intimate that some exquisite piece of humour was going forward, though what it was Mr. Pickwick could not for the life of him divine.

"Step in, Mr. Pickwick," said Lowten. "Well, will you leave a message, Mr. Watty, or will you call again?"

"Ask him to be so kind as to leave out word what has been done in my business," said the man, "for God's sake don't neglect it, Mr. Lowten."

"No, no, I won't forget it," replied the clerk. "Walk in, Mr. Pickwick. Good morning, Mr. Watty, it's a fine day for walking, isn't it?" Seeing that the stranger still lingered, he beckoned Sam Weller to follow his master in, and shut the door in his face.

"There never was such a pestering bankrupt as that since the world began, I do believe!" said Lowten throwing down his pen with the air of an injured man. "His affairs haven't been in Chancery quite four years yet, and I'm d—d if he don't come worrying here twice a week. Step this way, Mr. Pickwick. Peiker is in, and he'll see you, I know. Devilish cold," he added, pettishly, "standing at that door, wasting one's time with such seedy vagabonds!" Having very vehemently stirred a particularly large fire with a particularly small poker, the clerk led the way to his principal's private room, and announced Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, my dear sir," said little Mr. Peiker, busting up from his chair. "Well, my dear sir, and what's the news about your matter, eh? Anything more about our friends in Freeman's Court? They've not been sleeping, I know that. Ah, they're very smart fellows, very smart, indeed."

As the little man concluded, he took an emphatic pinch of snuff, as a tribute to the smartness of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg.

"They are great scoundrels," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Aye, aye," said the little man, "that's a matter of opinion, you know, and we won't dispute about terms, because of course you can't be expected to view these subjects with a professional

eye Well, we've done everything that's necessary I have retained Sergeant Snubbin "<sup>1</sup>

"Is he a good man?" inquired Mr Pickwick

"Good man!" replied Peiker, "bless your heart and soul, my dear sir, Sergeant Snubbin is at the very top of his profession Gets treble the business of any man in court—engaged in every case You needn't mention it abroad; but we say—we of the profession—that Sergeant Snubbin leads the court by the nose'

The little man took another pinch of snuff as he made this communication, and nodded mysteriously to Mr Pickwick

"They have subpoena'd my three friends," said Mr Pickwick

"Ah! of course they would," replied Peiker "Important witnesses, saw you in a delicate situation"

"But she fainted of her own accord," said Mr Pickwick "She threw herself into my arms"

"Very likely my dear sir," replied Peiker, "very likely and very natural Nothing more so, my dear sir, nothing But who's to prove it?"

"They have subpoena'd my servant too," said Mr Pickwick, quitting the other point, for there Mr Peiker's question had somewhat staggered him

"Sam?" said Peiker

Mr Pickwick replied in the affirmative

"Of course, my dear sir, of course I knew they would could have told *you* that a month ago You know, my dear sir, if you *will* take the management of your affairs into your own hands after intrusting them to your solicitor, you must also take the consequences" Here Mr Peiker drew himself up with conscious dignity, and blushed some stray grains of snuff from his shirt frill

"And what do they want him to prove?" asked Mr Pickwick, after two or three minutes' silence

"That you sent him up to the plaintiff's to make some offer of a compromise, I suppose," replied Peiker "It don't matter much, though, I don't think many counsel could get a great deal out of *him*"

"I don't think they could," said Mr Pickwick ~~sneaking~~, despite his vexation, at the idea of Sam's appearance as a witness "What course do we pursue?"

"We have only one to adopt, my dear sir," replied Peiker,

"cross-examine the witnesses, trust to Snubbins's eloquence, throw dust in the eyes of the judge, throw ourselves on the jury."

"And suppose the verdict is against me?" said Mr Pickwick.

Mr Perker smiled, took a very long pinch of snuff, stared the fire, shrugged his shoulders, and remained expressively silent.

"You mean that in that case I must pay the damages?" said Mr Pickwick, who had watched this telegraphic answer with considerable sternness.

Perker gave the fire another very unnecessary poke, and said "I am afraid so."

"Then I beg to announce to you, my unalterable determination to pay no damages whatever," said Mr Pickwick, most emphatically. "None, Perker. Not a pound, not a penny, of my money, shall find its way into the pockets of Dodson and Fogg. That is my deliberate and inevitable determination." Mr Pickwick gave a heavy blow on the table before him, in confirmation of the inevitability of his intention.

"Very well, my dear sir, very well," said Perker. "You know best, of course."

"Of course," replied Mr Pickwick, hastily. "Where does Serjeant Snubbins live?"

"In Lincoln's Inn Old Square," replied Perker.

"I should like to see him," said Mr Pickwick.

"See Serjeant Snubbins, my dear sir!" rejoined Perker, in utter amazement. "Pooh, pooh, my dear sir, impossible! See Serjeant Snubbins! Bless you, my dear sir, such a thing was never heard of, without a consultation fee being previously paid, and a consultation fixed. It couldn't be done, my dear sir, it couldn't be done."

Mr Pickwick, however, had made up his mind not only that it could be done, but that it should be done, and the consequence was, that within ten minutes after he had received the assurance that the thing was impossible, he was conducted by his solicitor into the outer office of the great Serjeant Snubbins himself.

It was an uncarpeted room of tolerable dimensions, with a large writing-table drawn up near the fire—the bawze top of which had long since lost all claim to its original hue of green,

and had gradually grown grey with dust and age, except where all traces of its natural colour were obliterated by ink-stains. Upon the table were numerous little bundles of papers tied with red tape, and behind it, sat an elderly clerk, whose sleek appearance, and heavy gold watch-chain, presented imposing indications of the extensive and lucrative practice of "Mr Serjeant Snubb'm.

"Is the Serjeant in his room, Mr Mallard?" inquired Perker, offering his box with all imaginable courtesy

"Yes he is," was the reply, "but he's very busy. Look here, not an opinion given yet, on any one of these cases, and an expedition fee paid with all of 'em." The clerk smiled as he said this, and inhaled the pinch of snuff with a zest which seemed to be compounded of a fondness for snuff and a relish for fees.

"Something like practice that," said Perker.

"Yes," said the barrister's clerk, producing his own box, and offering it with the greatest cordiality, "and the best of it is, that as nobody alive except myself can read the Serjeant's writing, they are obliged to wait for the opinions, when he has given them, till I have copied 'em, ha—ha—ha!"

"Which makes good for we know who, besides the Serjeant, and draws a little more out of the clients, eh?" said Perker, "Ha, ha, ha!" At this the Serjeant's clerk laughed again, not a noisy boisterous laugh, but a silent, internal chuckle, which Mr Pickwick disliked to hear. When a man bleeds inwardly, it is a dangerous thing for himself, but when he laughs inwardly, it bodes no good to other people.

"You haven't made me out that little list of the fees that I'm in your debt, have you?" said Perker.

"No, I have not," replied the clerk.

"I wish you would," said Perker. "Let me have them, and I'll send you a cheque. But I suppose you're too busy pocketing the ready money, to think of the debtors, eh? ha, ha, ha!" This sally seemed to tickle the clerk amazingly, and he once more enjoyed a little quiet laugh to himself.

"But, Mr Mallard, my dear friend," said Perker, suddenly recovering his gravity, and drawing the great man's great man into a corner, by the lappel of his coat, "you must persuade the Serjeant to see me, and my client here."

"Come, come," said the clerk, "that's not bad either. See

the Serjeant' come, that's too absurd" Notwithstanding the absurdity of the proposal, however, the clerk allowed himself to be gently drawn beyond the hearing of Mr Pickwick, and after a short conversation conducted in whispers, walked softly down a little dark passage, and disappeared in the legal luminary's sanctum whence he shortly returned on tiptoe, and informed Mr Perker and Mr Pickwick that the Serjeant had been prevailed upon, in violation of all established rules and customs, to admit them at once

Mr Serjeant Snubbins was a lantern-faced, sallow-complexioned man, of about five-and-forty, or—as the novels say—he might be fifty. He had that dull-looking booted eye which is often to be seen in the heads of people who have applied themselves during many years to a weary and laborious course of study, and which would have been sufficient, without the additional eye-glass which dangled from a broad black riband round his neck to warn a stranger that he was very near-sighted. His hair was thin and weak, which was partly attributable to his having never devoted much time to its arrangement, and partly to his having worn for five-and-twenty years the forensic wig which hung on a block beside him. The marks of hair-powder on his coat-collar, and the ill-washed and worse tied white neckerchief round his throat, showed that he had not found leisure since he left the court to make any alteration in his dress while the slovenly style of the remainder of his costume warranted the inference that his personal appearance would not have been very much improved if he had Books of practice, heaps of papers, and opened letters, which were scattered over the table, without any attempt at order or arrangement, the furniture of the room was old and ricketty, the doors of the book-case were rotting in their hinges, the dust flew out from the carpet in little clouds at every step, the blinds were yellow with age and dirt, the state of everything in the room showed with a clearness not to be mistaken, that Mr Serjeant Snubbins was far too much occupied with his professional pursuits to take any great heed or regard of his personal comforts.

The Serjeant was writing when his clients entered, he bowed abstractedly when Mr. Pickwick was introduced by his solicitor, and then, motioning them to a seat, put his pen carefully in the inkstand, nursed his left leg, and waited to be spoken to.

"Mr Pickwick is the defendant in Barrell and Pickwick, Serjeant Snubbin," said Perker

"I am retained in that, am I?" said the Serjeant.

"You are, sir," replied Perker

The Serjeant nodded his head, and waited for something else

"Mr Pickwick was anxious to call upon you, Serjeant Snubbin," said Perker, "to state to you, before you entered upon the case, that he denies there being any ground or pretence whatever for the action against him, and that unless he came into court with clean hands, and without the most conscientious conviction that he was right in resisting the plaintiff's demand, he would not be there at all. I believe I state your views correctly; do I not, my dear sir?" said the little man, turning to Mr Pickwick

"Quite so," replied that gentleman

Mr Serjeant Snubbin unfolded his glasses, raised them to his eyes, and, after looking at Mr Pickwick for a few seconds with great curiosity, turned to Mr Perker, and said, smiling slightly as he spoke

"Has Mr Pickwick a strong case?"

The attorney shrugged his shoulders

"Do you purpose calling witnesses?"

"No"

The smile on the Serjeant's countenance became more defined; he rocked his leg with increased violence, and, throwing himself back in his easy-chair, coughed dubiously

These tokens of the Serjeant's presentiments on the subject, slight as they were, were not lost on Mr Pickwick. He settled the spectacles, through which he had attentively regarded such demonstrations of the barrister's feelings as he had permitted himself to exhibit, more firmly on his nose, and said with great energy, and in utter disregard of all Mr Perker's admonitory winkings and frownings

"My wishing to wait upon you, for such a purpose as this, sir, appears, I have no doubt, to a gentleman who sees so much of these matters as you must necessarily do, a very extraordinary circumstance"

The Serjeant tried to look gravely at the fire, but the smile came back again.

"Gentlemen of your profession, sir," continued Mr. Pickwick,



The first interview with Mr Sergeant Snubbins

"see the worst side of human nature All its disputes, all its ill-will and bad blood, rise up before you You know from your experience of juries (I mean no disparagement to you, or them) how much depends upon *effect* and you are apt to attribute to others, a desire to *use*, for purposes of deception and self-interest, the very instruments which you, in pure honesty and honour of purpose, and with a laudable desire to do you utmost for your client, know the temper and worth of so well, from constantly employing them yourselves I really believe that to this circumstance may be attributed the vulgar but very general notion of your being, as a body, suspicious, distrustful, and over-cautious Conscious as I am, sir, of the disadvantage of making such a declaration to you, under such circumstances, I have come here, because I wish you distinctly to understand, as my friend Mr Perker has said, that I am innocent of the falsehood laid to my charge, and although I am very well aware of the estimable value of your assistance, sir I must beg to add, that unless you sincerely believe this, I would rather be deprived of the aid of your talents than have the advantage of them"

Long before the close of this address, which we are bound to say was of a very prosy character for Mr Pickwick, the Serjeant had relapsed into a state of abstraction After some minutes, however, during which he had reassumed his pen, he appeared to be again aware of the presence of his clients, raising his head from the paper, he said, rather snappishly,

"Who is with me in this case?"

"Mr Phunk, Serjeant Snubbin," replied the attorney

"Phunk, Phunk," said the Serjeant, "I never heard the name before He must be a very young man"

"Yes, he is a very young man," replied the attorney "He was only called the other day. Let me see—he has not been at the Bar eight years yet"

"Ah, I thought not," said the Serjeant, in that sort of pitying tone in which ordinary folks would speak of a very helpless little child "Mr Mallard, send round to Mr — Mr —"

"Phunk's—Holborn Court, Gray's Inn," interposed Perker (Holborn Court, by the bye, is South Square now) "Mr Phunk, and say I should be glad if he'd step here, a moment"

Mr Mallard departed to execute his commission, and Serjeant

Snubbin relapsed into abstraction until Mr Phunkie himself was introduced.

Although an infant barrister, he was a full-grown man. He had a very nervous manner, and a painful hesitation in his speech, it did not appear to be a natural defect, but seemed rather the result of timidity, arising from the consciousness of being "kept down" by want of means, or interest, or connexion, or impudence, as the case might be. He was overawed by the Serjeant, and profoundly courteous to the attorney.

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing you before, Mr. Phunkie," said Serjeant Snubbin, with haughty condescension.

Mr. Plunkie bowed. He had had the pleasure of seeing the Serjeant, and of envying him too, with all a poor man's envy, for eight years and a quarter.

"You are with me in this case, I understand?" said the Serjeant.

If Mr. Phunkie had been a rich man, he would have instantly sent for his clerk to remind him, if he had been a ~~wise~~ one, he would have applied his fore-finger to his forehead, and endeavoured to recollect, whether, in the multiplicity of his engagements, he had undertaken this one, or not, but as he was neither rich nor wise (in this sense at all events) he turned red, and bowed.

"Have you read the papers, Mr. Phunkie?" inquired the Serjeant.

Here again, Mr. Phunkie should have professed to have forgotten all about the merits of the case, but as he had read such papers as had been laid before him in the course of the action, and had thought of nothing else, waking or sleeping, throughout the two months during which he had been retained as Mr. Serjeant Snubbin's junior, he turned a deeper red, and bowed again.

"This is Mr. Pickwick," said the Serjeant, waving his pen in the direction in which that gentleman was standing.

Mr. Phunkie bowed to Mr. Pickwick with a reverence which a first client must ever awaken, and again inclined his head towards his leader.

"Perhaps you will take Mr. Pickwick away," said the Serjeant, "and—and—and—hear anything Mr. Pickwick may wish to communicate. We shall have a consultation, of course." With this hint that he had been interrupted quite long enough.

Mr Serjeant Snubbin, who had been gradually growing more and more abstracted, applied his glass to his eyes for an instant, bowed slightly round, and was once more deeply immersed in the case before him which arose out of an interminable law-suit, originating in the act of an individual, deceased a century or so ago, who had stopped up a pathway leading from some place which nobody ever came from, to some other place which nobody ever went to.

Mr Phunkie would not hear of passing through any door until Mr Pickwick and his solicitor had passed through before him, so it was some time before they got into the Square, and when they did reach it, they walked up and down, and held a long conference, the result of which was, that it was a very difficult matter to say how the verdict would go, that nobody could presume to calculate on the issue of an action, that it was very lucky they had prevented the other party from getting Serjeant Snubbin, and other topics of doubt and consolation, common to such a position of affairs.

Mr Weller was then roused by his master from a sweet sleep of an hour's duration, and, bidding adieu to Lowten, they returned to the City.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

DESCRIBES, FAR MORE FULLY THAN THE COURT NEWSMAN EVER DID, A BACHELOR'S PARTY, GIVEN BY MR BOB SAWYER AT HIS LODGINGS IN THE BOROUGH

THERE is a repose about Lant Street, in the Borough, which sheds a gentle melancholy upon the soul. There are always a good many houses to let in the street; it is a bye-street too, and its dulness is soothing. A house in Lant Street would not come within the denomination of a first-rate residence, in the strict acceptation of the term, but it is a most desirable spot nevertheless. If a man wished to abstract himself from the world—to remove himself from within the reach of temptation—to place himself beyond the possibility of any induce-

ment to look out of the window—he should by all means go to Lant Street

In this happy retreat are colonised a few clear-starchers, a sprinkling of journeymen bookbinders, one or two prison agents for the Insolvent Court, several small housekeepers who are employed in the Docks, a handful of mantua-makers, and a seasoning of jobbing tailors. The majority of the inhabitants either direct their energies to the letting of furnished apartments, or devote themselves to the healthful and invigorating pursuit of mangling. The chief features in the still life of the street are green shutters, lodging-bills, brass door-plates, and bell-handles, the principal specimens of animated nature, the pot-boy, the muffin youth, and the baked-potato man. The population is migratory, usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day, and generally by night. His Majesty's revenues are seldom collected in this happy valley, the rents are dubious, and the water communication is very frequently cut off.

Mr Bob Sawyer embellished one side of the fire, in his first-floor front, early on the evening for which he had invited Mr Pickwick, and Mr Ben Allen the other. The preparations for the reception of visitors appeared to be completed. The umbrellas in the passage had been heaped into the little corner outside the back-parlour door, the bonnet and shawl of the landlady's servant had been removed from the banisters, there were not more than two pairs of pattens on the street-door mat, and a kitchen candle, with a very long snuff, burnt cheerfully on the ledge of the staircase window. Mr Bob Sawyer had himself purchased the spirits at a wine vaults in High Street, and had returned home preceding the bearer thereof, to preclude the possibility of their delivery at the wrong house. The punch was ready-made in a red pan in the bed-room, a little table, covered with a green baize cloth, had been borrowed from the parlour, to play at cards on, and the glasses of the establishment, together with those which had been borrowed for the occasion from the public-house, were all drawn up in a tray, which was deposited on the landing outside the door.

Notwithstanding the highly satisfactory nature of all these arrangements, there was a cloud on the countenance of Mr Bob Sawyer, as he sat by the fire-side. There was a sympathising expression, too, in the features of Mr Ben Allen, as he

gazed intently on the coals, and a tone of melancholy in his voice, as he said, after a long silence

“Well, it is unlucky she should have taken it in her head to turn sour, just on this occasion. She might at least have waited till to-morrow.”

“That’s her malevolence, that’s her malevolence,” returned Mr. Bob Sawyer, vehemently. “She says that if I can afford to give a party I ought to be able to pay her confounded ‘little bill’.”

“How long has it been running?” inquired Mr. Ben Allen. A bill, by the bye, is the most extraordinary locomotive engine that the genius of man ever produced. It would keep on running during the longest lifetime, without ever once stopping of its own accord.

“Only a quarter, and a month or so,” replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.

Ben Allen coughed hopelessly, and directed a searching look between the two top bars of the stove.

“It’ll be a deuced unpleasant thing if she takes it into her head to let out, when those fellows are here, won’t it?” said Mr. Ben Allen at length.

“Horrible,” replied Bob Sawyer, “horrible.”

A low tap was heard at the room door. Mr. Bob Sawyer looked expressively at his friend, and bade the tapper come in, whereupon a dirty slipshod girl in black cotton stockings, who might have passed for the neglected daughter of a superannuated dustman in very reduced circumstances, thrust in her head, and said,

“Please, Mister Sawyer, Missis Raddle wants to speak to you.”

Before Mr. Bob Sawyer could return any answer, the girl suddenly disappeared with a jerk, as if somebody had given her a violent pull behind, this mysterious exit was no sooner accomplished than there was another tap at the door—a smart pointed tap, which seemed to say, “Here I am, and in I’m coming.”

Mr. Bob Sawyer glanced at his friend with a look of abject apprehension, and once more cried “Come in.”

The permission was not at all necessary, for, before Mr. Bob Sawyer had uttered the words, a little fierce woman bounced into the room, all in a tremble with passion, and pale with rage.

"Now Mr Sawyer," said the little, fierce woman, trying to appear very calm, "if you'll have the kindness to settle that little bill of mine I'll thank you, because I've got my rent to pay this afternoon, and my landlord's a waiting below now" Here the little woman rubbed her hands, and looked steadily over Mr Bob Sawyer's head, at the wall behind him

"I am very sorry to put you to any inconvenience, Mrs Raddle," said Bob Sawyer, deferentially, "but—"

"Oh, it isn't any inconvenience," replied the little woman, with a shrill titter "I didn't want it particular before to-day, leastways, as it has to go to my landlord directly, it was as well for you to keep it as me You promised me this afternoon, Mr Sawyer, and every gentleman as has ever lived here, has kept his word, sir, as of course anybody as calls himself a gentleman, does" Mrs Raddle tossed her head, bit her lips, rubbed her hands harder, and looked at the wall more steadily than ever It was plain to see, as Mr Bob Sawyer refrarked in a style of eastern allegory on a subsequent occasion, that she was "getting the steam up"

"I am very sorry, Mrs Raddle," said Bob Sawyer with all imaginable humility, "but the fact is, that I have been disappointed in the City to-day."—Extraordinary place that City An astonishing number of men always are getting disappointed there

"Well, Mr Sawyer," said Mrs Raddle, planting herself firmly on a purple cauliflower in the Kidderminster carpet, "and what's that to me, sir?"

"I—I have no doubt, Mrs Raddle," said Bob Sawyer, blinking this last question, "that before the middle of next week we shall be able to set ourselves quite square, and go on, on a better system, afterwards"

This was all Mis Raddle wanted She had hustled up to the apartment of the unlucky Bob Sawyer, so bent upon going into a passion, that, in all probability, payment would have rather disappointed her than otherwise She was in excellent order for a little relaxation of the kind, having just exchanged a few introductory compliments with Mr. R. in the front kitchen

"Do you suppose, Mr Sawyer," said Mrs Raddle, elevating her voice for the information of the neighbours, "do you suppose that I'm a-going day after day to let a fellar occupy my lodgings as never thinks of paying his rent, nor even the

very money laid out for the fresh butter and lump sugar that's bought for his breakfast, and the very milk that's took in, at the street door? Do you suppose a hard-working and industrious woman as has lived in this street for twenty year (ten year o'er the way, and nine year and three quarter in this very house) has nothing else to do but to work herself to death after a parcel of lazy idle fellars, that are always smoking and drinking, and lounging, when they ought to be glad to turn their hands to anything that would help 'em to pay then bills? Do you—"

"My good soul," interposed Mr Benjamin Allen, soothingly

"Have the goodness to keep you observashuns to yourself, sir, I beg," said Mrs Raddle, suddenly arresting the rapid torrent of her speech, and addressing the third party with impressive slowness and solemnity "I am not a-weer, sir, that you have any right to address your conversation to me I don't think I let these apartments to you, sir"

"No, you certainly did not," said Mr Benjamin Allen.

"Very good, sir," responded Mrs Raddle, with lofty politeness "Then p'raps, sir, you'll confine yourself to breaking the arms and legs of the poor people in the hospitals, and keep yourself to yourself, sir, or there may be some persons here as will make you, sir."

"But you are such an unreasonable woman," remonstrated Mr Benjamin Allen.

"I beg your parding, young man," said Mrs Raddle, in a cold perspiration of anger "But will you have the goodness just to call me that again, sir?"

"I didn't make use of the word in any invidious sense, ma'am," replied Mr Benjamin Allen, growing somewhat uneasy on his own account

"I beg your parding, young man," demanded Mrs Raddle in a louder and more imperative tone "But who do you call a woman? Did you make that remark to me, sir?"

"Why, bless my heart!" said Mr Benjamin Allen

"Did you apply that name to me, I ask of you, sir?" interrupted Mrs Raddle, with intense fierceness, throwing the door wide open

"Why, of course I did," replied Mr Benjamin Allen

"Yes, of course you did," said Mrs Raddle, backing gradually to the door, and raising her voice to its loudest pitch, for

the special behoof of Mr Raddle in the kitchen "Yes, of course you did! And everybody knows that they may safely insult me in my own ouse while my husband sits sleeping down-stairs, and taking no more notice than if I was a dog in the streets He ought to be ashamed of himself (here Mrs Raddle sobbed) to allow his wife to be treated in this way by a parcel of young cutters and carvers of live people's bodies, that disgraces the lodgings (another sob), and leaving her exposed to all manner of abuse, a base, faint-hearted, timorous wretch, that's afraid to come up stairs, and face the ruffinly creatures—that's afraid—that's afraid to come!" Mrs Raddle paused to listen whether the repetition of the taunt had roused her better half, and, finding that it had not been successful, proceeded to descend the stairs with sobs innumerable when there came a loud double knock at the street door whereupon she burst into an hysterical fit of weeping, accompanied with dismal moans, which was prolonged until the knock had been repeated six times, when, in an uncontrollable burst of mental agony, she threw down all the umbrellas, and disappeared into the back parlour, closing the door after her with an awful crash.

"Does Mr Sawyer live here?" said Mr Pickwick, when the door was opened.

"Yes," said the girl, "first floor It's the door straight afore you, when you gets to the top of the stairs" Having given this instruction, the handmaid, who had been brought up among the aboriginal inhabitants of Southwark, disappeared, with the candle in her hand, down the kitchen stairs perfectly satisfied that she had done everything that could possibly be required of her under the circumstances.

Mr Snodgrass, who entered last, secured the street door, after several ineffectual efforts, by putting up the chain, and the friends stumbled up stairs, where they were received by Mr Bob Sawyer, who had been afraid to go down, lest he should be waylaid by Mrs Raddle.

"How are you?" said the discomfited student "Glad to see you,—take care of the glasses" This caution was addressed to Mr Pickwick, who had put his hat in the tray.

"Dear me," said Mr Pickwick, "I beg your pardon."

"Don't mention it, don't mention it," said Bob Sawyer "I'm rather confined for room here, but you must put up with all that, when you come to see a young bachelor Walk in You've

seen this gentleman before, I think?" Mr. Pickwick shook hands with Mr. Benjamin Allen, and his friends followed his example. They had scarcely taken their seats when there was another double knock.

"I hope that's Jack Hopkins!" said Mr. Bob Sawyer.  
"Hush. Yes, it is. Come up, Jack, come up."

A heavy footstep was heard upon the stairs, and Jack Hopkins presented himself. He wore a black velvet waistcoat, with thunder-and-lightning buttons, and a blue striped shirt, with a white false collar.

"You're late, Jack?" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.  
"Been detained at Bartholomew's," replied Hopkins.  
"Anything new?"  
"No, nothing particular. Rather a good accident brought into the casualty ward."

"What was that, sir?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.  
"Only a man fallen out of a four pan of 'tans' window,—but it's a very fair case—very fair case indeed."

"Do you mean that the patient is in a fair way to recover?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"No," replied Hopkins, carelessly. "No, I should rather say he wouldn't. There must be a splendid operation though, to-morrow—magnificent sight if Slasher does it."

"You consider Mr. Slasher a good operator?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Best alive," replied Hopkins. "Took a boy's leg out of the socket last week—boy ate five apples and a gingerbread cake—exactly two minutes after it was all over, boy said he wouldn't lie there to be made game of, and he'd tell his mother if they didn't begin."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickwick, astonished.  
"Pooh! That's nothing, that ain't," said Jack Hopkins.  
"Is it, Bob?"

"Nothing at all," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer.  
"By the bye, Bob," said Hopkins, with a scarcely perceptible glance at Mr. Pickwick's attentive face, we had a curious accident last night. A child was brought in, who had swallowed a necklace."

"Swallowed what, sir?" interrupted Mr. Pickwick.  
"A necklace," replied Jack Hopkins. "Not all at once, you know, that would be too much—you couldn't swallow that, if

the child did—eh, Mr. Pickwick, ha' ha'!" Mr. Hopkins appeared highly gratified with his own pleasantry, and continued. "No, the way was this Child's parents were poor people who lived in a court Child's eldest sister bought a necklace, common necklace, made of large black wooden beads Child, being fond of toys, cribbed the necklace, hid it, played with it, cut the string, and swallowed a bead Child thought it capital fun, went back next day, and swallowed another bead"

"Bless my heart," said Mr. Pickwick, "what a dreadful thing! I beg your pardon, sir Go on"

"Next day, child swallowed two beads, the day after that, he treated himself to three, and so on, till in a week's time he had got through the necklace—five-and-twenty beads in all The sister, who was an industrious girl, and seldom treated herself to a bit of finery, cried her eyes out, at the loss of the necklace, looked high and low for it, but, I needn't say, didn't find it A few days afterwards, the family were at dinner—baked shoulder of mutton, and potatoes under it—the child, who wasn't hungry, was playing about the room, when suddenly there was heard a devil of a noise, like a small hail storm 'Don't do that, my boy,' said the father 'I ain't a don' nothing,' said the child 'Well, don't do it again,' said the father There was a short silence, and then the noise began again, worse than ever 'If you don't mind what I say, my boy,' said the father, 'you'll find yourself in bed, in something less than a pig's whisper' He gave the child a shake to make him obedient, and such a rattling ensued as nobody ever heard before 'Why, damme, it's in the child!' said the father, 'he's got the croup in the wrong place!' 'No I haven't, father,' said the child, beginning to cry, 'it's the necklace, I swallowed it, father'—The father caught the child up, and ran with him to the hospital the beads in the boy's stomach rattling all the way with the jolting, and the people looking up in the air, and down in the cellars to see where the unusual sound came from He's in the hospital now," said Jack Hopkins, "and he makes such a devil of a noise when he walks about, that they're obliged to muffle him in a watchman's coat, for fear he should wake the patients!"

"That's the most extraordinary case I ever heard of," said Mr. Pickwick, with an emphatic blow on the table

"Oh, that's nothing," said Jack Hopkins, "is it, Bob?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Bob Sawyer

"Very singular things occur in our profession, I can assure you, sir," said Hopkins

"So I should be disposed to imagine," replied Mr. Pickwick

Another knock at the door, announced a large-headed young man in a black wig, who brought with him a scrofulous youth in a long stock. The next comer was a gentleman in a shirt emblazoned with pink anchois, who was closely followed by a pale youth with a plated watchguard. The arrival of a prim personage in clean linen and cloth boots rendered the party complete. The little table with the green baize cover was wheeled out, the first instalment of punch was brought in, in a white jug, and the succeeding three hours were devoted to *rungt-el-un* at sixpence a dozen, which was only once interrupted by a slight dispute between the scrofulous youth and the gentleman with the pink anchois, in the course of which, the scrofulous youth intimated a burning desire to pull the nose of the gentleman with the emblems of hope in reply to which, that individual expressed his decided unwillingness to accept of any "sance" on gratuitous terms, either from the nascent young gentleman with the scrofulous countenance, or any other person who was ornamented with a head.

When the last "natural" had been declared, and the profit and loss account of fish and sixpences adjusted, to the satisfaction of all parties, Mr. Bob Sawyer rang for supper, and the visitors squeezed themselves into corners while it was getting ready.

It was not so easily got ready as some people may imagine. First of all, it was necessary to awaken the girl, who had fallen asleep with her face on the kitchen table, this took a little time, and, even when she did answer the bell, another quarter of an hour was consumed in fruitless endeavours to impart to her a faint and distant glimmering of reason. The man to whom the order for the oysters had been sent, had not been told to open them, it is a very difficult thing to open an oyster with a limp knife or a two-pronged fork, and very little was done in this way. Very little of the beef was done either, and the ham (which was also from the German-sausage shop round the corner) was in a similar predicament. However, there was plenty of porter in a tin can, and the cheese went a great way, for it was

very strong So upon the whole, perhaps, the supper was quite as good as such matters usually are

After supper, another jug of punch was put upon the table, together with a paper of cigars, and a couple of bottles of spirits Then, there was an awful pause, and this awful pause was occasioned by a very common occurrence in this sort of place, but a very embarrassing one notwithstanding

The fact is, the girl was washing the glasses The establishment boasted four, we do not record the circumstance as at all derogatory to Mrs Raddle, for there never was a lodging-house yet, that was not short of glasses The landlady's glasses were little thin blown glass tumblers, and those which had been borrowed from the public-house were great, dropsical, bloated articles, each supported on a huge gouty leg This would have been in itself sufficient to have possessed the company with the real state of affairs, but the young woman of all work had prevented the possibility of any misconception arising in the mind of any gentleman upon the subject, by forcibly dragging every man's glass away, long before he had finished his beer, and audibly stating, despite the winks and interruptions of Mr Bob Sawyer, that it was to be conveyed down stairs, and washed forthwith

It is a very ill wind that blows nobody any good The prim man in the cloth boots, who had been unsuccessfully attempting to make a joke during the whole time the round game lasted, saw his opportunity, and availed himself of it The instant the glasses disappeared, he commenced a long story about a great public character, whose name he had forgotten, making a particularly happy reply to another eminent and illustrious individual whom he had never been able to identify He enlarged at some length and with great minuteness upon divers collateral circumstances, distantly connected with the anecdote in hand, but for the life of him he couldn't recollect at that precise moment what the anecdote was, although he had been in the habit of telling the story with great applause for the last ten years

"Dear me," said the prim man in the cloth boots, "it is a very extraordinary circumstance"

"I am sorry you have forgotten it," said Mr Bob Sawyer, glancing eagerly at the door, as he thought he heard the noise of glasses jingling, "very sorry"

"So am I," responded the prim man, "because I know it would have afforded so much amusement. Never mind, I dare say I shall manage to recollect it, in the course of half-an-hour or so."

The prim man arrived at this point, just as the glasses came back, when Mr Bob Sawyer, who had been absorbed in attention during the whole time, said he should very much like to hear the end of it, for, so far as it went, it was, without exception, the very best story he had ever heard.

The sight of the tumblers restored Bob Sawyer to a degree of equanimity which he had not possessed since his interview with his landlady. His face brightened up, and he began to feel quite convivial.

"Now, Betsy," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, with great suavity, and dispersing, at the same time, the tumultuous little mob of glasses the girl had collected in the centre of the table "now, Betsy, the warm water be brisk, there's a good girl."

"You can't have no warm water," replied Betsy.

"No warm water," exclaimed Mr Bob Sawyer

"No," said the girl, with a shake of the head which expressed a more decided negative than the most copious language could have conveyed. "Missis Raddle said you warn't to have none."

The surprise depicted on the countenances of his guests imparted new courage to the host.

"Bring up the warm water instantly—instantly!" said Mr Bob Sawyer, with desperate sternness.

"No I can't," replied the girl "Missis Raddle raked out the kitchen fire afore she went to bed, and locked up the kettle."

"Oh, never mind, never mind. Pray don't disturb yourself about such a trifle," said Mr Pickwick, observing the conflict of Bob Sawyer's passions, as depicted in his countenance, "cold water will do very well."

"Oh, admirably," said Mr Benjamin Allen.

"My landlady is subject to some slight attacks of mental derangement," remarked Bob Sawyer with a ghastly smile; "and I fear I must give her warning."

"No, don't," said Ben Allen.

"I fear I must," said Bob with heroic firmness "I'll pay her what I owe her, and give her warning to-morrow morning." Poor fellow! how devoutly he wished he could!

Mr Bob Sawyer's heart-sickening attempts to rally under this last blow, communicated a dispiriting influence to the company, the greater part of whom, with the view of raising their spirits, attached themselves with extra cordiality to the cold brandy and water, the first perceptible effects of which were displayed in a renewal of hostilities between the scrofulous youth and the gentleman in the shirt. The belligerents vented their feelings of mutual contempt, for some time, in a variety of frownings and snortings, until at last the scrofulous youth felt it necessary to come to a more explicit understanding on the matter, when the following clear understanding took place

"Sawyer," said the scrofulous youth, in a loud voice

"Well, Noddy," replied Mr Bob Sawyer

"I should be very sorry, Sawyer," said Mr Noddy, "to create any unpleasantness at any friend's table, and much less at yours, Sawyer—very, but I must take this opportunity of informing Mr Gunter that he is no gentleman"

"And I should be very sorry, Sawyer, to create any disturbance in the street in which you reside," said Mr Gunter, "but I'm afraid I shall be under the necessity of alarming the neighbours by throwing the person who has just spoken, out o' window."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" inquired Mr Noddy.

"What I say, sir," replied Mr Gunter

"I should like to see you do it, sir," said Mr Noddy

"You shall *feel* me do it in half a minute, sir," replied Mr. Gunter

"I request that you'll favour me with your card, sir," said Mr Noddy

"I'll do nothing of the kind, sir," replied Mr Gunter

"Why not, sir?" inquired Mr Noddy

"Because you'll stick it up over your chimney-piece, and delude your visitors into the false belief that a gentleman has been to see you, sir," replied Mr Gunter

"Sir, a friend of mine shall wait on you in the morning," said Mr Noddy.

"Sir, I'm very much obliged to you for the caution, and I'll leave particular directions with the servant to lock up the spoons," replied Mr Gunter

At this point the remainder of the guests interposed, and remonstrated with both parties on the impropriety of their

conduct, on which Mr Noddy begged to state that his father was quite as respectable as Mr Gunter's father, to which Mr Gunter replied that his father was to the full as respectable as Mr Noddy's father, and that his father's son was as good a man as Mr Noddy, any day in the week. As this announcement seemed the prelude to a commencement of the dispute, there was another interference on the part of the company, and a vast quantity of talking and clamouring ensued, in the course of which Mr Noddy gradually allowed his feelings to overpower him, and professed that he had ever entertained a devoted personal attachment towards Mr Gunter. To this Mr Gunter replied that, upon the whole he rather preferred Mr Noddy to his own brother, on hearing which admission, Mr Noddy magnanimously rose from his seat, and proffered his hand to Mr Gunter. Mr Gunter grasped it with affecting fervour, and everybody said that the whole dispute had been conducted in a manner which was highly honourable to both parties concerned.

"Now," said Jack Hopkins, "just to set us going again, Bob, I don't mind singing a song." And Hopkins, incited thereto by tumultuous applause, plunged himself at once into 'The King, God bless him,' which he sang as loud as he could, to a novel air, compounded of the 'Bay of Biscay,' and 'A Fog he would.' The chorus was the essence of the song, and, as each gentleman sang it to the tune he knew best, the effect was very striking indeed.

It was at the end of the chorus to the first verse, that Mr Pickwick held up his hand in a listening attitude, and said, as soon as silence was restored,

"Hush! I beg you pardon. I thought I heard somebody calling from up stairs."

A profound silence immediately ensued, and Mr Bob Sawyer was observed to turn pale.

"I think I hear it now," said Mr Pickwick. "Have the goodness to open the door."

The door was no sooner opened than all doubt on the subject was removed.

"Mr Sawyer! Mr. Sawyer!" screamed a voice from the two-pair landing.

"It's my landlady," said Bob Sawyer, looking with great dismay. "Yes, Miss Raddle."

"What do you mean by this, Mr Sawyer?" replied the voice, with great shrillness and rapidity of utterance. "Ain't it enough to be swindled out of one's rent, and money lent out of pocket besides, and abused and insulted by your friends that dares to call themselves men without having the house turned out of window, and noise enough made to bring the fire-engines here, at two o'clock in the morning?—Turn them wretches away!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves," said the voice of Mr Raddle, which appeared to proceed from beneath some distant bed-clothes.

"Ashamed of themselves!" said Mrs Raddle. "Why don't you go down and knock 'em every one down stairs? You would if you was a man."

"I should if I was a dozen men, my dear," replied Mr Raddle, pacifically, "but they've the advantage of me in numbers, my dear."

"Ugh, you coward!" replied Mrs Raddle, with supreme contempt. "Do you mean to turn them wretches out, or not, Mr Sawyer?"

"They're going, Mrs Raddle, they're going," said the miserable Bob. "I am afraid you'd better go," said Mr Bob Sawyer to his friends. "I thought you were making too much noise."

"It's a very unfortunate thing," said the prim man. "Just as we were getting so comfortable too!" The prim man was just beginning to have a dawning recollection of the story he had forgotten.

"It's hardly to be borne," said the prim man, looking round. "Hardly to be borne, is it?"

"Not to be endured," replied Jack Hopkins, "let's have the other verse, Bob. Come, here goes!"

"No, no, Jack, don't," interposed Bob Sawyer, "it's a capital song, but I am afraid we had better not have the other verse. They are very violent people, the people of the house."

"Shall I step up stairs and pitch into the landlord?" inquired Hopkins, "or keep on ringing the bell, or go and groan on the staircase? You may command me, Bob."

"I am very much indebted to you for your friendship and good nature, Hopkins," said the wretched Mr Bob Sawyer, "but I think the best plan to avoid any further dispute is for us to break up at once."

"Now Mr Sawyer!" screamed the shrill voice of Mrs Raddle, "*are* them brutes going?"

"They're only looking for their hats, Mrs Raddle," said Bob, "they are going directly"

"Going!" said Mrs Raddle, thrusting her night-cap over the bannisters just as Mr Pickwick, followed by Mr Tupman, emerged from the sitting-room "Going! what did they ever come for?"

"My dear ma'am," remonstrated Mr Pickwick, looking up

"Get along with you, you old wretch!" replied Mrs Raddle, hastily withdrawing the night-cap "Old enough to be his grandfather, you willin'! You're worse than any of 'em"

Mr Pickwick found it in vain to protest his innocence, so hurried down stairs into the street, whether he was closely followed by Mr Tupman, Mr Winkle, and Mr Snodgrass. Mr. Ben Allen, who was dismally depressed with spirits and agitation, accompanied them as far as London Bridge, and in the course of the walk confided to Mr Winkle, as an especially eligible person to intrust the secret to, that he was resolved to cut the throat of any gentleman except Mr Bob Sawyer, who should aspire to the affections of his sister Arabella. Having expressed his determination to perform this painful duty of a brother with proper firmness, he burst into tears, knocked his hat over his eyes, and, making the best of his way back, knocked double knocks at the door of the Borough Market office, and took short naps on the steps alternately, until day-break, under the firm impression that he lived there, and had forgotten the key.

The visitors having all departed, in compliance with the rather pressing request of Mrs Raddle, the luckless Bob Sawyer was left alone, to meditate on the probable events of to-morrow, and the pleasures of the evening.

## CHAPTER V.

MR WELLER THE ELDER DELIVERS SOME CRITICAL SENTIMENTS  
RESPECTING LITERARY COMPOSITION, AND, ASSISTED BY HIS  
SON SAMUEL, PAIS A SMALL INSTALMENT OF RETALIATION TO  
THE ACCOUNT OF THE REVEREND GENTLEMAN WITH THE RED  
NOSE

THE morning of the thirteenth of February, which the readers of this authentic narrative know, as well as we do, to have been the day immediately preceding that which was appointed for the trial of Mis Baudell's action, was a busy time for Mr Samuel Weller, who was perpetually engaged in travelling from the George and Vulture to Mr Perker's chambers and back again, from and between the hours of nine o'clock in the morning and two in the afternoon both inclusive. Not that there was anything whatever to be done, for the consultation had taken place, and the course of proceeding to be adopted, had been finally determined on, but Mr Pickwick being in a most extreme state of excitement, persevered in constantly sending small notes to his attorney, merely containing the inquiry, "Dear Perker Is all going on well?" to which Mr Perker invariably forwarded the reply, "Dear Pickwick As well as possible," the fact being, as we have already hinted, that there was nothing whatever to go on, either well or ill, until the sitting of the court on the following morning.

But people who go voluntarily to law, or are taken forcibly there, for the first time, may be allowed to labour under some temporary irritation and anxiety, and Sam, with a due allowance for the frailties of human nature, obeyed all his master's behests with that imperturbable good humour and unruffable composure which formed one of his most striking and amiable characteristics.

Sam had solaced himself with a most agreeable little dinner, and was waiting at the bar for the glass of warm mixture in which Mr. Pickwick had requested him to drown the fatigues of his morning's walks, when a young boy of about three feet high, or thereabouts, in a hairy cap and fustian over-all, whose garb bespoke a laudable ambition to attain in time the elevation of an hostler, entered the passage of the George and Vulture,

and looked first up the stairs, and then along the passage, and then into the bar, as if in search of somebody to whom he bore a commission, whereupon the barmaid, conceiving it not improbable that the said commission might be directed to the tea or table spoons of the establishment, accosted the boy with

“Now, young man, what do *you* want?”

“Is there anybody here, named Sam?” inquired the youth, in a loud voice of treble quality.

“What’s the *fother* name?” said Sam Weller, looking round.

“How should I know?” briskly replied the young gentleman below the hairy cap.

“You’re a sharp boy, you are,” said Mr. Weller, “only I wouldn’t show that very fine edge too much, if I was you, in case anybody took it off. What do you mean by comin’ to a hotel, and asking arter Sam, with as much politeness as a wild Indian?”

“Cos an old gen’l’m’n told me to,” replied the boy.

“What old gen’l’m’n?” inquired Sam, with deep disdain.

“Him, as drives a Ipswich coach, and uses our parlour,” rejoined the boy. “He told me yesterday mornin’ to come to the George and Wultur this afternoon, and ask for Sam.”

“It’s my father, my dear,” said Mr. Weller, turning with an explanatory air to the young lady in the bar, “blessed if I think he hardly knows wot my other name is. Well, young Brockley sprout, wot then?”

“Why, then,” said the boy, “you was to come to him at six o’clock to our ouse, ‘cos he wants to see you—Blue Boar, Leaden’all Market. Shall I say you’re comin’?”

“You *may* venture on that ‘ere statement, sir,” replied Sam. And thus empowered, the young gentleman walked away, awakening all the echoes in George Yard, as he did so, with several chaste and extremely correct imitations of a drover’s whistle, delivered in a tone of peculiar richness and volume.

Mr. Weller having obtained leave of absence from Mr. Pickwick, who, in his then state of excitement and worry was by no means displeased at being left alone, set forth, long before the appointed hour, and having plenty of time at his disposal, sauntered down as far as the Mansion House, where he paused and contemplated, with a face of great calmness and philosophy, the numerous cads and drivers of short stages who assemble

near that famous place of resort, to the great terror and confusion of the old-lady population of these realms Having loitered here, for half an hour or so, Mr. Weller turned, and began wending his way towards Leadenhall Market, through a variety of bye streets and courts As he was sauntering away his spare time, and stopped to look at almost every object that met his gaze, it is by no means surprising that Mr. Weller should have paused before a small stationer's and print-seller's window, but without further explanation it does appear surprising that his eyes should have no sooner rested on certain pictures which were exposed for sale therein, than he gave a sudden start, smote his right leg with great vehemence, and exclaimed with energy, "If it hadn't been for this, I should ha' forgot all about it till it was too late!"

The particular picture on which Sam Weller's eyes were fixed, as he said this, was a highly coloured representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together with an arrow, cooking before a cheerful fire, while a male and female cannibal in modern attire the gentleman being clad in a blue coat and white trousers, and the lady in a deep red pelisse with a parasol of the same were approaching the meal with hungry eyes, up a serpentine gravel path leading thereunto. A decidedly indelicate young gentleman, in a pair of wings and nothing else, was depicted as superintending the cooking, a representation of the spire of the church in Langham Place, London, appeared in the distance, and the whole formed a "valentine," of which, as a written inscription in the window testified, there was a large assortment within, which the shopkeeper pledged himself to dispose of, to his countrymen generally, at the reduced rate of one and sixpence each

"I should ha' forgot it, I should certainly ha' forgot it!" said Sam, so saying, he at once stepped into the stationer's shop, and requested to be served with a sheet of the best gilt-edged letter-paper, and a hard-nibbed pen which could be warranted not to splutter These articles having been promptly supplied, he walked on direct towards Leadenhall Market at a good round pace, very different from his recent lingeing one Looking round him, he there beheld a sign-board on which the painter's art had delineated something remotely resembling a cerulean elephant with an aquiline nose in lieu of trunk. Rightly conjecturing that this was the Blue Boar himself,

he stepped into the house, and inquired concerning his parent

“He won’t be here this three quarters of an hour or more,” said the young lady who superintended the domestic arrangements of the Blue Boar

“Very good, my dear,” replied Sam “Let me have nine penn’orth o’ brandy and water luke, and the inkstand, will you miss?”

The brandy and water luke, and the inkstand, having been carried into the little parlour, and the young lady having carefully flattened down the coals to prevent them blazing, and carried away the poker to preclude the possibility of the fire being stirred, without the full privity and concurrence of the Blue Boar being first had and obtained, Sam Weller sat himself down in a box near the stove, and pulled out the sheet of gilt-edged letter-paper, and the hard-nibbed pen. Then looking carefully at the pen to see that there were no hairs in it, and dusting down the table, so that there might be no crumbs of bread under the paper, Sam tucked up the cuffs of his coat, squared his elbows, and composed himself to write

To ladies and gentlemen who are not in the habit of devoting themselves practically to the science of penmanship, writing a letter is no very easy task, it being always considered necessary in such cases for the writer to recline his head on his left arm, so as to place his eyes as nearly as possible on a level with the paper, while glancing sideways at the letters he is constructing, to form with his tongue imaginary characters to correspond. These motions, although unquestionably of the greatest assistance to original composition, retard in some degree the progress of the writer, and Sam had unconsciously been a full hour and a half writing words in small text, smearing out wrong letters with his little finger, and putting in new ones which required going over very often to render them visible through the old blots, when he was roused by the opening of the door and the entrance of his parent.

“Well, Sammy,” said the father

“Well, my Proshan Blue,” responded the son, laying down his pen “What’s the last bulletin about mother-in-law?”

“Mrs. Weller passed a very good night, but is uncommon perverse, and unpleasant this mornin’ Signed upon oath, S.

Weller, Esquire, Senior That's the last vun as was issued, Sammy," replied Mr Weller, untying his shawl

"No better yet?" inquired Sam

"All the symptoms aggerawated," replied Mr Weller, shaking his head "But wot's that, you're a doin' of? Pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, Sammy?"

"I've done now," said Sam with slight embarrassment, "I've been a wittin'"

"So I see," replied Mr Weller "Not to any young 'ooman, I hope, Sammy?"

"Why it's no use a sayin' it ain't," replied Sam "It's a valentine"

"A what?" exclaimed Mr Weller, apparently horror-stricken by the word

"A valentine," replied Sam

"Samivel, Samivel," said Mr Weller, in reproachful accents; "I didn't think you'd ha' done it Arter the warfin' you've had o' your father's vicious propensities, arter all I've said to you upon this here very subject, arter actuawly seem' and bein' in the company o' your own mother-in-law, vich I should ha' thought wos a moral lesson as no man could never ha' forgotten to his dyn' day! I didn't think you'd ha' done it, Sammy, I didn't think you'd ha' done it!" These reflections were too much for the good old man He raised Sam's tumbler to his lips and drank off its contents

"Wot's the matter now?" said Sam

"Nevr mind, Sammy," replied Mr Weller, "it'll be a very agonizin' trial to me at my time of life, but I'm pretty tough, that's vun consolation, as the wery old turkey remarked wen the farmer said he wos aafeerd he should be obliged to kill him for the London market"

"Wot'll be a trial?" inquired Sam

"To see you married, Sammy—to see you a dulluded victim, and thinkin' in your innocence that it's all very capital," replied Mr Weller "It's a dreadful trial to a fathei's feelin's, that 'ere, Sammy!"

"Nonsense," said Sam "I ain't a goin' to get married, don't you fret yourself about that, I know you're a judge of these things Order in your pipe, and I'll read you the letter There!"

We cannot distinctly say whether it was the prospect of the

pipe, or the consolatory reflection that a fatal disposition to get married ran in the family and couldn't be helped, which calmed Mr Weller's feelings, and caused his grief to subside. We should be rather disposed to say that the result was attained by combining the two sources of consolation, for he repeated the second in a low tone, very frequently, ringing the bell meanwhile, to order in the first. He then divested himself of his upper coat, and lighting the pipe and placing himself in front of the fire with his back towards it, so that he could feel its full heat and recline against the mantelpiece at the same time turned towards Sam, and, with a countenance greatly mollified by the softening influence of tobacco, requested him to " sit away."

Sam dipped his pen into the ink to be ready for any corrections, and began with a very theatrical air

" 'Lovely——'"

"Stop," said Mr Weller, ringing the bell. "A double glass o' the invariable, my dear."

"Very well, sir," replied the girl, who with great quickness appeared, vanished, returned, and disappeared

"They seem to know your ways here," observed Sam

"Yes," replied his father, "I've been here before, in my time. Go on, Sammy."

" 'Lovely creature,'" repeated Sam

"Tain't in poetry, is it?" interposed his father

"No, no," replied Sam

"Weir'y glad to hear it" said Mr Weller. "Poetry's unnatural, no man ever talked poetry 'cept a beadle on bovin' day, or Warren's blackin', or Rowland's oil, or some o' them low fellows, never you let yourself down to talk poetry, my boy. Begun agin, Sammy?"

Mr Weller resumed his pipe with critical solemnity, and Sam once more commenced, and read as follows

" 'Lovely creature I feel myself a dammed—'"

"That ain't proper," said Mr Weller, taking his pipe from his mouth

"No, it ain't 'dammed,'" observed Sam, holding the letter up to the light, "it's shamed, there's a blot there—'I feel myself ashamed'"

"Werry good," said Mr Weller. "Go on."

"Feel myself ashamed, and completely cir—' I forget what

this here word is," said Sam, scratching his head with the pen, in vain attempts to remember

"Why don't you look at it, then?" inquired Mr. Weller

"So I am a lookin' at it," replied Sam, "but there's another blot. Here's a 'c,' and a 'i,' and a 'd'"

"Circumwented, p'raps," suggested Mr. Weller

"No, it ain't that," said Sam, "circumscribed, that's it"

"That ain't as good a word as circumwented, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, gravely

"Think not?" said Sam

"Nothin' like it," replied his father

"But don't you think it means more?" inquired Sam

"Well, p'raps it is a more tender word," said Mr. Weller, after a few moments' reflection "Go on, Sammy"

"Feel myself ashamed and completely circumscribed in a dressin' of you, for you are a nice gal and nothin' but it!"

"That's a werry pretty sentiment," said the elder Mr. Weller, removing his pipe to make way for the remark

"Yes, I think it is rayther good," observed Sam, highly flattered

"Wot I like in that 'ere style of writin'," said the elder Mr. Weller, "is, that there ain't no callin' names in it,—no Venuses, nor nothin' o' that kind. Wot's the good o' callin' a young 'ooman a Venus or a angel, Sammy?"

"Ah! what, indeed?" replied Sam

"You might just as well call her a griffin, or a unicorn, or a king's arms at once, which is werry well known to be a collection o' fabulous animals," added Mr. Weller.

"Just as well," replied Sam.

"Drive on Sammy," said Mr. Weller

Sam complied with the request, and proceeded as follows his father continuing to smoke, with a mixed expression of wisdom and complacency, which was particularly edifying

"Afore I see you, I thought all women was alike!"

"So they are," observed the elder Mr. Weller, parenthetically

"But now," continued Sam, "now I find what a reg'lar soft headed, inkred'lous turnip I must ha' been, for there ain't nobody like you, though I like you better than nothin' at all. I thought it best to make that rayther strong," said Sam, looking up

Mr Weller nodded approvingly, and Sam resumed

“ So I take the privilege of the day, Mary, my dear—as the gen’lm’n in difficulties did, ven he walked out of a Sunday,—to tell you that the first and only time I see you, your likeness was took on my hait in much quicker time and brighter colours than ever a likeness was took by the profeel macheen (wich p’raps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho it *does* finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete, with a hook at the end to hang it up by, and all in two minutes and a quarter ” ”

“ I am afeerd that werges on the poetical, Sammy,” said Mr Weller, dubiously

“ No it don’t,” replied Sam, reading on very quickly, to avoid contesting the point

“ ‘ Except of me Mary my dear as your walentine and think over what I’ve said—My dear Mary I will now conclude ’ That’s all,’ said Sam

“ That’s rather a sudden pull up, ain’t it, Sammy? ” inquired Mr Weller

“ Not a bit on it,” said Sam, “ she’ll vish there wos more, and that’s the great art o’ letter writin’ ”

“ Well, ” said Mr Weller, “ there’s somethin’ in that, and I wish your mother-in-law ‘ud only conduct her conversation on the same gen’-teel principle Am’t you a goin’ to sign it? ”

“ That’s the difficulty, ” said Sam, “ I don’t know what to sign it ” ”

“ Sign it, Vellei, ” said the oldest surviving proprietor of that name

“ Won’t do, ” said Sam “ Never sign a walentine with your own name ” ”

“ Sign it ‘ Pickwick, ’ then, ” said Mr Weller, “ it’s a werry good name, and a easy one to spell ” ”

“ The werry thing, ” said Sam. “ I could end with a verse, what do you think? ” ”

“ I don’t like it, Sam, ” rejoined Mr. Weller “ I never know’d a respectable coachman as wrote poetry, ‘cept one, as made an affectin’ copy o’ wersed the night afore he wos hung for a highway robbery, and he wos only a Cambervell man, so even that’s no rule. ” ”

But Sam was not to be persuaded from the poetical idea that had occurred to him, so he signed the letter,